

In the first reading today, Jeremiah is speaking the prophetic truth of peace with the Babalonions to the King although it was not very popular. For this, he was thrown into a cistern where he found himself sinking in the mud. Then Jesus in the Gospel is talking about fire and that He did not come for peace but to bring about division. What in the heavens is going on with this?!

What does Jesus mean by division. I want to start with the first area of division – right here inside our heart – at least for me. Have there been times in my life where I did not agree with Church teaching – yes. Have I been upset by these teachings and how they affect what I want to do in my life – yes. Have I been mad at God or His Church, or His ministers for something – yes. Were God and His Church speaking the truth – Yes!

So what changed? I fell in love with God. It was a number of years ago. I walked into Church one day and I realized (thank you Holy Spirit!) that Jesus (the Word made Flesh) was right there in the Gospel processing into the Sanctuary. I realized the bread and wine are His Body, His Blood, His soul and His divinity - right here.

I realized the intimate connection that exists between His Word proclaimed and the Eucharist. This is why the Gospel is placed on the Altar! I realized Jesus is truly present. We are called to adore the Lord before and when we receive Him. Saint John Paul II tells us receiving the Eucharist is the most intimate encounter we can have.

Sometimes as you are approaching to receive the Lord, I am so overwhelmed by the immense grace bestowed on me to even do this. And then sometimes, as you are approaching, I am overwhelmed by YOU, how YOU adore Him, How you receive Him – I see Christ in YOU.

How do I eliminate division in my heart and find peace in my life – it starts with falling in love with Jesus. To fully encounter Him in every way possible during Mass. When we fully embrace all we receive in Mass – and let me tell you it is a lot – we are more able to go out and share what we have received because we now embody it.

The other part of division in our heart is sin. Sin is division with God. Listen, Sin...is...division...with...God. Do I sin – yes. Do I want to rationalize my sin sometimes – yes. Do I think my sin is not that bad sometimes – yes. Do I sometimes wait too long to go to confession – Yes. Do I try and convince myself something is only a venial sin and not a mortal sin sometimes – Yes. Do I need God's mercy and forgiveness – absolutely Yes!

Once I figured out how important confession was (thank you again Holy Spirit), I now have a desire to go more often because being right with God, and not divided, is the most important thing!

Have we lost our understanding that both the Eucharist and reconciliation are SACRAMENTS!. Sacraments are an efficacious sign (that means it does something), instituted by Christ, entrusted to the Church, to give grace. We are receiving grace!

The sacrament of reconciliation helps us better prepare to receive the sacrament of the Eucharist. And this whole idea of preparation begins before Mass starts, in particular, an examination of conscience. So that when we do the penitential act at the beginning of Mass we can truly call to mind our sins. So that we may be fully ready to receive God!

Now, we have ourselves altogether, it is time to go out and proclaim the truth which as Jeremiah shows us is not always popular and can lead to difficulty.

Let's start with family and those closest to us. **Many times, we are trying to keep the peace instead of serving the peace.** Saint Maximillian Kolbe, who is one of those saintly witnesses talked about in the 2nd

reading today, suffered greatly, even to death. He was in a German concentration camp and they wanted to make an example out of a group of men because people were trying to escape. He took the place of a man who was a husband and a father. The Germans proceeded to starve the whole group to death. During this entire experience, Saint Maximilian Kolbe created solidarity among those being starved through prayer to the Virgin Mary. Eventually they had to kill him by lethal injection.

How far are we willing to go for those we love? In matters of life-and-death it might be easy to make that decision. But in so many ways, those closest to us are dying in their souls through division with God. If we believe in Who we receive, then prayer and action are demanded of us. Is it a risk? Yes.

How do we bring about healing in our family divisions? Through the spiritual works of mercy. To share and teach the faith boldly and without reservation. To speak with those who have doubts along the way. To correct those who are doing wrong in a non-judgmental way. To comfort those who are dealing with grief. To forgive others. To bear those things done to us wrongly with patience. To pray for those alive and those who have passed away.

But what happens when we do not get the response we had hoped for, that division and misunderstanding remain. We pray for them, but not only do we pray for them, we sacrifice for them – what do I mean? We give more of ourselves in prayer and giving to that person – offering your intention of Mass just for them, saying a rosary for them, doing the Stations of the Cross for them, lifting them up through your own sacrifice. In this process, only God knows what will happen, but what I can tell you is you will be even more transformed because of this sacrifice.

There are 1.2 billion Catholics in the world. This is triple what there was 100 years ago. We represent 16% of the world population. Our brothers and sisters of other Christian denominations represent 16%. This means 32% of the world is Christian.

But are we truly in solidarity with one another – the answer is No! There is so much division even in Christianity. So the religion of Christianity is spreading, but we have to ask ourselves, is the TRUTH spreading?

The ability of the Truth to spread starts right here in our heart, then it goes to our family, and families are the domestic church and families are what make up the world. How do you make a difference in the world? Start by fully living out the Truth of Jesus in your own life. You can start a fire with one flame and that flame is called to be you.

Come Holy Spirit fill the hearts of your faithful, enkindle in us the fire of your love, send forth your Spirit and we shall be created and you shall renew the faith of the earth. Oh God who by the light of the Holy Spirit instructs the hearts of the faithful, grant that by that same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever rejoice in His consolation through Christ our Lord. God, through His Sacraments can fill us...be completely open...and we shall be on fire and created to the fullness of who we are intended to be and because of this Jesus, with our help, will renew the face of the earth. And when we allow God to be the guide of heart, we will rejoice and all those throughout the world will sing to the glory of God.