

Fr. Romeo Evangelista Homily
Sunday, August 14, 2022
20th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Cycle C

The Gospel today introduces Jesus as an ambassador of division. This is not who Jesus is like. What happened to His Mission to bring peace on earth? Incarnation was meant to bring peace on earth. Instead, we now hear Him say, "I have come to bring fire upon the earth and how I wish it were blazing already." Jesus openly declared His intention to destroy and even stressed His impatience for its coming. Later, He even added: "Do you think that I have come to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division."

We should, however, put His statements in context. Jesus, who knew human nature perfectly, was also talking about the effect of His presence. He knew that among members of the family, friends, and other groups, He will be a cause for differences, disputes, flights, and division. We know of members of families going their own way, choosing their own faith.

Choosing a religion is an important and necessary conviction for a person. Even our Constitution guarantees that. Indeed, if we fail to respect and understand each other's beliefs, we will separate.

But division is not Jesus's ultimate goal. He meant it as a stage before, hopefully, unity in Him. Paul professed that "all will be united in Christ." Because that is how it is meant to be. Division, if it comes, should serve as a challenge and a transition. Let Jesus' words be a test of fire. And let His actions be a disturbing witness of His person.

There is so much division in our world today. Most of these because we failed to respect each other's differences. We need to work more on the things that will bring unity to our families, communities and to our world.

As Christians, we need to show more love, we need to be more compassionate to one another. With that, Jesus will certainly help us unite in peace. In the Kingdom he preached, the moving force is love, sacrificial love, preferential love for others. The figure of Christ as a baby in Bethlehem and the figure of Christ on the cross, drawing people to himself and each other – these are powerful invitations to unity and peace with one another.

There is always unity in following the way of the Lord. May His love and His peace always reign in our hearts.