

FATHER MARK SCHULTE
HOMILY
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“Truth and Freedom”

My brothers and sisters, we hear in the Gospel how Jesus makes a very strong statement, seemingly against what one would consider common sense. He said: “Do you think that I have come to establish peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. From now on a household of five will be divided, three against two and two against three, a father against his son and son against his father. A mother against her daughter and a daughter against her mother” (Lk 12:49-53).

What could Jesus possibly do to cause family members to be separated against each other? After all Jesus is the prince of peace (Isa 9:6). We see how once again Jesus uses the metaphor of a family to make his point. The strongest human relationships that we have are between family members. Jesus does not mention division between husband and wife, but because they are family members as well, they too can be included in this potential division. What could cause any of these family members to be divided?

Jesus mentions himself as the cause of division (Lk 2:34). Jesus calls himself the way, the truth, and the life (Jn 14:6). Jesus is the truth and He has come to bring the truth to his people. Everything about Jesus is true, He is truth personified, his teaching is true and he has given his Church the responsibility to bring his teaching, his truth, to the whole world. “Go and teach all nations”, Jesus said to His Apostles (Mt 28:19).

Thus, Jesus through His Apostles, through His Church brings the truth of Christ to the whole world. However, here is the kicker. Will everyone accept this truth? Some will, but many will not. Even after 2000 years since the coming of Christ over half of the people in many countries now profess to be atheist, non-believers, sometimes called nones. Even those European countries that were at one time predominantly Catholic are now predominantly non-believers. They have rejected the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They have for sure rejected Jesus as being God. Most of these countries have established laws that are directly opposed to the Moral law of God. These countries are made up of families and some of those family members have gone the way of atheism.

And so, what is it that causes division among family members, people of a community and people of a nation? It is the truth that Jesus brings. Truth itself does not cause division; it is the rejection of that truth. It is the rare family today that is not divided in some way because one or more family members have either rejected the truth or refuse to support it.

The rejection of truth among people naturally brings division. When there is division among people there is friction, and where there is friction there is a lack of

peace. If that lack of peace is deep enough and lasts long enough there will likely be war. The civil war in the United States between the states is an example of this. There continues to exist an unspoken tension in our streets and towns today. It is because the truth of Jesus Christ has been by and large rejected by too many of its citizens. If Jesus said that division can happen in a family, then it can certainly happen in a community.

For example some of our family members are living with someone without the benefit of marriage. Some have chosen to follow the homosexual lifestyle. Some have entered into unlawful marriages. Some have procured an abortion or use contraception or invitro fertilization. All of these practices are against the law of God, they are contrary to the truth that Jesus brings. They therefore cause division, friction, and a lack of peace in a family.

We have all heard the saying, “Go along to get along”. We all want to “get along” with others, but some things we can’t simply go along with. Choosing the way of truth can be difficult because it runs contrary to the false choices of others. We sometimes think that we can bring peace to a family if we simply accept false choices, or go along with the false choices of others, especially if they are family members. But we in fact only prolong the division and lack of peace when we do this, and we do the transgressor of truth no favors either by going along with their false choices (Lk 6:22).

One definition of a martyr is to adhere to the truth of Jesus Christ no matter what. Even when the majority want us to deviate from the truth. For to deviate from the truth is to reject Jesus Christ who is the truth.

In the movie “*For Greater Glory*”, which depicts part of the Mexican revolution, a young boy was threatened with death if he did not renounce his Catholic faith. His father had already done so and was encouraging his son to do the same to save his life. The young boy refused and was killed. We need more martyrs for the truth.

Jesus is the Word (Jn 1:1). His Gospel is the Word of God; it is the truth of God. The Book of Hebrews tells us: “For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Heb 4:12).

My brothers and sisters, it is the truth that divides, it separates the men from the boys, the weak from the strong, the saved from those who are lost. Seek the side of truth, seek Jesus Christ no matter the cost, and you will have his peace in your life.

Again, from the letter to the Hebrews, “In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood”; much less risking your relationship with family or friends, who have chosen the wrong path (Heb 12:4). It is the truth that sets us free, not going along simply to get along.