

our Lord, Thy Son, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God, world without end. Amen.

English Translation

Hail, holy Queen, Mother of mercy, our life, our sweetness, and our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve; to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn, then, most gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy towards us; and after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of they womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray. O almighty and everlasting God, who, by the cooperation of the Holy Ghost, didst prepare the body and soul of Mary, glorious Virgin and Mother, to become the worthy habitation of Thy Son: grant that we may be delivered from present evils, and from everlasting death, by her gracious intercession, in whose commemoration we rejoice. Through the same Christ our Lord, Thy Son, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God, world without end. Amen.

“The End” Notes

- [1] Navarre Bible pg. 159-160 [2] Gabriel, Divine Intimacy vol. III, pg. 214
- [3] From a homily on Matthew by Saint John Chrysostom, bishop
- [4] cf. Jn. 17:21 [5] Hardon, Modern Catholic Dictionary, pg. 411
- [6] YouCat (Youth Catechism); 395 [7] Gabriel, Divine Intimacy vol. III, pg. 215
- [8] Gabriel, Divine Intimacy vol. III, pg. 214 [9] Navarre Bible pg. 159-160
- [10] CCC 2804 [11] CCC 696 [12] Navarre Bible pg. 159 [13] CCC 607
- [14] Navarre Bible pg. 159 [15] Navarre Bible pg. 159
- [16] Gabriel, Divine Intimacy vol. III, pg. 214-215
- [17] Fernandez, In Conversation with God 3, 66.2
- [18] Fernandez, In Conversation with God 3, pg. 403 [19] ibid.
- [20] Fernandez, In Conversation with God 3, 66.2 [21] ibid.
- [22] Hebrews 4:12-13 [23] Fernandez, In Conversation with God 3, 66.3
- [24] J. Escrivá, The Forge, 31

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20th Sunday in Ordinary Time Set the World Ablaze

Lessons and Discussions

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“Do you think that I have come to establish peace on the earth? No I tell you, but rather division”

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“I have come to set the earth on fire”

Page 12 – Love in Words and Deeds

“how I wish it were already blazing!”

Entrance Antiphon – Roman Missal

This should be chanted so that the time of prayer, study and discussion can be made sacred.

Protector noster

Ps 84 (83): 10, 11

IV

Behold, O God our protector, * and consider the face
of your Anointed; for one day in your house is better
than a thousand elsewhere.

Alternate options:

Lift High the Cross
O God, Our Help in Ages Past
The Church's One Foundation
What Wondrous Love Is This?
Better is One Day
Consume Me
Light the Fire
Set a Fire
Cool or Holy (Remnant)

Collect – Roman Missal

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

O God, who have prepared for those who love you
good things which no eye can see,
fill our hearts, we pray, with the warmth of your love,
so that, loving you in all things and above all things,
we may attain your promises,
which surpass every human desire.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

my God, and grant me charity with filial fear. Preserve me, O ineffable Love, from every evil thought; warm me, inflame me with Thy dear love, and every pain will seem light to me. My Father, my sweet Lord, help me in all my actions. Jesus, love, Jesus, love. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

Marian Antiphon – Salve Regina – Simple Tone

IV. ANTIPHON SALVE REGINA, SIMPLE TONE
From First Vespers of the Feast of the Blessed Trinity to None on Saturday
before the First Sunday of Advent.

Ant.
5.

Salve, Re-gi-na, * ma-ter mi-se-ri-córdi-æ: Vi-ta, dulcé-do, et spes nostra,
salve. Ad te clamá-mus, éx-su-les, fi-li-i He-væ Ad te suspi-rá-mus,
gemén-tes et flentes in hac lacrimá-rum valle. E-ia ergo, Advocá-ta
nostra, il-los tu-os mi-se-ri-córdes ócu-los ad nos convér-te. Et Je-sum,
bene-díctum fructum ventris tu-i, nobis post hoc exsí-li-um osténde.
O clemens: O pi-a: O dulcis * Virgo Ma-rí-a.

V. Ora pro nobis, sancta Dei Genitrix.
R. Ut digni efficiamur promissionibus Christi

Let us pray. O almighty and everlasting God, who, by the co-operation of the Holy Ghost, didst prepare the body and soul of Mary, glorious Virgin and Mother, to become the worthy habitation of Thy Son: grant that we may be delivered from present evils, and from everlasting death, by her gracious intercession, in whose commemoration we rejoice. Through the same Christ

our Baptism to be prophet, priest, and king in Christ Jesus. As prophet we, as Christ, must speak the Word of God and this Word is truth itself. When we speak (dicere), it will be against (contra) the devil, the world, and the flesh. This is what we take a vow to in our baptism. We speak out against the devil (Do you reject Satan?). We speak out against our own sinfulness, which we call the corruption of the flesh (And all his works?). We speak out against the false teachings of the world (And all his empty promises?) Our speaking out is not always with words, but most of the time, with our life, which is the Life of Christ.

How should people know they are receiving God's love? This whole lesson is about our words and deeds and putting those words and deeds into practice. If we put love into practice through word and deed then, "No one who has known us should be left indifferent. Our love should be something alive, a burning fire that sets off other fires of love and apostolate...We should not forget that it takes only a tiny spark to ignite a forest fire." [23]

VIDEO – How fast a fire can spread – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 5:40

<http://youtu.be/zhh5iJII1LY>

This video shows how just a tiny spark can ignite a raging fire within a home. If we can start a tiny spark of love with our every day actions, then we can ignite a fire that cannot be contained. We can help fulfill Jesus' wish to set the whole world on fire all over again for Him.

"O Jesus, strengthen our souls, open out the way for us, and above all, intoxicate us with your Love. Make us into blazing fires to enkindle the earth with the heavenly fire you brought us." [24]

Profession of Faith or Popular Devotion – Prayer to the Holy Spirit by St. Catherine of Siena

This short prayer, written by St. Catherine of Siena (1347-1380), a virgin and doctor of the Church,

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Holy Spirit, come into my heart; draw it to Thee by Thy power, O

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Gospel Reading – Luke 12:49-53 – Roman Missal

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke
- Glory to you O Lord

Jesus said to his disciples: "I have come to set the earth on fire, and how I wish it were already blazing! There is a baptism with which I must be baptized, and how great is my anguish until it is accomplished! Do you think that I have come to establish peace on the 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 will be divided against his son and a son against his father, a mother against her daughter and a daughter against her mother, a mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law."

The Gospel of the Lord.

- Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

Spiritual Reading – Office of Readings – 20th Sunday of Ordinary Time

From a homily on Matthew by Saint John Chrysostom, bishop
Salt of the earth and light of the world

You are the salt of the earth. It is not for your own sake, he says, but for the world's sake that the word is entrusted to you. I am not sending you into two cities only or ten or twenty, not to a single nation, as I sent the prophets of old, but across land and sea, to the whole world. And that world is in a miserable state. For when he says: *You are the salt of the earth*, he is indicating that all mankind had lost its savor and had been corrupted by sin. Therefore, he requires of these men those virtues which are especially useful and even necessary if they are to bear the burdens of many. For the man who is kindly, modest, merciful and just will not keep his good works to himself but will see to it that these admirable fountains send out their streams for the good of others. Again, the man who is clean of heart, a peacemaker and ardent for truth will order his life so as to contribute to the common good.

Do not think, he says, that you are destined for easy struggles or

unimportant tasks. *You are the salt of the earth.* What do these words imply? Did the disciples restore what had already turned rotten? Not at all. Salt cannot help what is already corrupted. That is not what they did. But what had first been renewed and freed from corruption and then turned over to them, they salted and preserved in the newness the Lord had bestowed. It took the power of Christ to free men from the corruption caused by sin; it was the task of the apostles through strenuous labor to keep that corruption from returning.

Have you noticed how, bit by bit, Christ shows them to be superior to the prophets? He says they are to be teachers not simply for Palestine but for the whole world. Do not be surprised, then, he says, that I address you apart from the others and involve you in such a dangerous enterprise. Consider the numerous and extensive cities, peoples and nations I will be sending you to govern. For this reason I would have you make others prudent, as well as being prudent yourselves. For unless you can do that, you will not be able to sustain even yourselves.

If others lose their savor, then your ministry will help them regain it. But if you yourselves suffer that loss, you will drag others down with you. Therefore, the greater the undertakings put into your hands, the more zealous you must be. For this reason he says: *But if the salt becomes tasteless, how can its flavor be restored? It is good for nothing now, but to be thrown out and trampled by men's feet.*

When they hear the words: *When they curse you and persecute you and accuse you of every evil,* they may be afraid to come forward. Therefore he says; "Unless you are prepared for that sort of thing, it is in vain that I have chosen you. Curses shall necessarily be your lot but they shall not harm you and will simply be a testimony to your constancy. If through fear, however, you fail to show the forcefulness your mission demands, your lot will be much worse, for all will speak evil of you and despise you. That is what being trampled by men's feet means."

Then he passes on to a more exalted comparison: *You are the light of the world.* Once again, "of the world": not of one nation or twenty cities, but of the whole world. The light he means is an intelligible light, far superior to the rays of the sun we see, just as the salt is a spiritual salt. First salt, then light, so that you may learn how profitable sharp words may be and how useful serious doctrine. Such teaching holds in check and prevents dissipation; it leads to virtue and sharpens the mind's eye. *A city*

to God and our neighbor? "We need to say 'Yes' to Love many times a day. We need to respond to Jesus in the thousand ordinary events of daily life: by denying ourselves and serving those others with whom we live and work; by living temperance and sobriety through small mortifications of the senses; by being punctual in the fulfillment of our duties; by being orderly at home and at work; by making the effort required to pray well; by happily accepting the Will of God whenever it does not fit in with our own plans or desires...This is how we say 'Yes' to God in the little victories of each day." [20]

Is it ever okay to say no to love? No. At every moment we should look to say yes. However, there are times when we will need to say no. Sometimes the most charitable or loving thing to do for someone is to say "no". For example, we can say no to ourselves if we are about to gossip or speak poorly about someone. Another example is saying no to the comforts of life in order to work hard for God. "There are many times when we have to say 'No' to ourselves if we are to honour our 'Yes' to Love: by guarding our eyes; by giving up many comforts and convinces; by refusing to leave off work early...The Holy Spirit can give us many indications as to how best to respond to Christ's infinite love for us." [21] **Discuss other times you may have to say "no" out of love.**

How can we refuel our love for God? We fuel our Love in front of the Tabernacle. There we receive the strength to by a sign of contradiction to the world.

Why should we be a sign of contradiction to the world? We are Christians, followers of Christ and thus we imitate Christ. Since Christ was a sign of contradiction, we too, if we follow Him, will be a sign of contradiction.

How are we a sign of contradiction? The word contradiction comes from two Latin words, *contra* "against" and *dicere* "to speak" There is no doubt that Jesus speaks against the false teachings of the world. When the Truth Himself speaks, He speaks against the falsehoods in society. This is why in Hebrews the author writes, "Indeed, the word of God is living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating even between soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and able to discern reflections and thoughts of the heart. No creature is concealed from him, but everything is naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must render an account." [22] We are called by

Love in Words and Deeds – Lesson and Discussion

“how I wish it were already blazing!”

Jesus has a burning love for us for all eternity. Jesus is love because He is God and God is love. St. Teresa of Avila said, “Love calls for love.” We are called to imitate God’s love in our own lives.

How is love best shown? This is very simple and also at the same time difficult. The simple answer is by our words and merits. The difficult part is actually doing it. “This response is best shown in deeds, in the daily effort to relate to God, to identify our will with his Will.” “No one should go away from us empty-handed. To everyone, in one way or another, with a word, with our example, with our prayer, we should announce that Christ is passing by, that Christ is waiting for us, that Christ wants us to serve him.” [17] The hard part is to have the courage to do it, as long as we need to, and to whatever the extent we need to take it. St. Gerard posted on his door post before he died, “Here the will of God is done; as He wills it; and as long as He wills it.”

In the second reading the letter to the Hebrews speaks of running the race. When running a marathon, a marathoner puts enormous strain on the body. The runner is willing to risk their own health for a goal of finishing. How much more do we strive and run the race to heaven? “We have our sights set on him, like the runner who will not let anything keep him from his goal. We will avoid any and all occasions of sin with decision and vigour, ...”[18] **How far are we willing to go? Are we willing to shed our blood?** “We have to be ready to go thus far, if necessary, in our struggle to avoid sin, even venial sin. It is better to die than to offend God, if only in a minor matter.”[19]

Music – “What was I thinking?” by Dierks Bently – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 3:32

<http://youtu.be/kAzp8FXA-FQ>

We may have heard the saying, “Love makes us do some crazy things.” This usually is in reference to the things men and women do for each other when they are in love. How much more are we in love with God. What “crazy” things are we willing to do for Him?

How many times do we need to show our love? As many times as we can. We constantly ask God to show us compassion and forgiveness with His love, but how often do we give our love

set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor do men light a lamp and put it under a basket. Here again he is urging them to a careful manner of life and teaching them to be watchful, for they live under the eyes of all and have the whole world for the arena of their struggles.

Responsory – Office of Readings – Acts 1:8; Matthew 5:16

You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you,
– and you will be my witnesses to the ends of the earth.

Your light must shine before men, so that they may see your good works and give praise to your father in heaven.
– And you will be my witnesses to the ends of the earth.

No Peace? – Lesson and Discussion

“Do you think that I have come to establish peace on the earth? No I tell you, but rather division”

Today’s Gospel reading is one of those passages that can be taken in many different ways. However, the Church cuts through to the core of the message of what Jesus means, and what is He really saying to the apostles.

Does Jesus want to bring division? In a way, yes. “During his own life on earth, Christ was a sign of contradiction (Lk. 2:34). Our Lord is forewarning his disciples about the contention and division which will accompany the spread of the Gospel (cf. Lk. 6:20; Mt. 10:24).”[1] Jesus knows everyone will not accept the message He brings. Jesus’ message is controversial. Jesus is God and God can only speak the truth. The truth causes separation in the sense that when we hear the truth we must choose. What side will we be on? The truth defines sides, and we must choose a side. As believers in Jesus Christ we give our whole self to what Jesus Christ, the Truth, wants us to do. We choose Truth. We choose Christ. Those that accept Jesus will be different than those who reject Him. This is why Jesus says there will be division among people.

Why does Jesus say there will be division? In a broad context for someone, “When the service of God is taken seriously, it does not offer a comfortable and tranquil life, but often exposes us to risk, struggle and persecution.”[2] Jesus Himself speaks of the persecution He would face with His baptism. The baptism Jesus is speaking about in the Gospel reading is that of His death on

the cross, baptism by blood. Saint John Chrysostom speaks of the risk, struggle, and persecution of the Christian when he writes, “Curses shall necessarily be your lot but they shall not harm you and will simply be a testimony to your constancy. If through fear, however, you fail to show the forcefulness your mission demands, your lot will be much worse, for all will speak evil of you and despise you. That is what being trampled by men’s feet means.”[3] There is a forcefulness to the mission of Christ, a forcefulness which demands that we not only stay the course but that we assert the forcefulness of the mission with the virtues of Christ, which are meekness, humility, and obedience.

Does Jesus want there to be division? No. In the Gospel of John, Jesus prays that we all may be one.[4] However, Jesus knows people have free will, and He knows the hearts of man. He knew Judas had the free will to reject Him, and eventually turn Him in. Jesus says He will not bring peace. The peace that Jesus is *not* bringing is what we call the world’s peace. The peace of the world is actually a “false peace” that promises to make all conflicts go away and all hatred between people go away. The idea of coexisting is in line with the world’s view of peace. This is a false notion of peace that is rooted in relativism. It states that we can all get along because anything goes, we can think and do as we please and everyone is right as long as they are not hurting another person. This is not the peace Jesus came to bring. He means to bring a different kind of peace.

[See also Link to Liturgy Lesson - Fear and Fatima]

What peace is Jesus talking about? Jesus is talking about the peace that only God can provide. When we truly have the knowledge of peace, we are able to live courageously. Peace can be the absence of conflict, but “it is also the serenity experienced because there is no conflict.”[5] In this case the conflict is not between two people, but between God and man. Jesus wants to bring such a peace in our hearts and souls that it will fire us up to face any challenge in our lives and still have conviction and fortitude to evangelize.

What is Peace as defined by the Church? – Peace is the consequence of justice and the sign of love put into action. Where there is peace, ‘every creature can come to rest in good order’ (Thomas Aquinas). Earthly peace is the image of the peace of Christ, who reconciled heaven and earth. Earthly peace is the

and so to the nature of charity is to multiply, illumine, and consume. The fire of God illumine us to our sin and then if we allow it, it will consume our sin. In most monasteries the sign of peace at Mass is first uttered by the priest or abbot who offers the “peace of Christ”. He then gives the peace of Christ to a fellow priest, deacon, or minister in the sanctuary. That priest, deacon, or minister then come down into the choir, where the other monk are and offers the peace of Christ to the first monk, who in turn offers it to the next and when all the monks have given the sign of peace the last monk will offer the sign of peace to the congregation who will in turn offer the sign of peace to each other. This peace flows from the priest “in persona Christi” down to the monks and then to the whole congregation like a row of dominos. This practice of giving the sign of peace is more true to the lighting of candles where the light is passed from one candle in progression to the next. Just as we pass the “fire of God” we also pass the “peace of Christ” a peace that ironically comes with fire.

How do we accomplish Jesus’ desire to set the earth on fire? As Saint Catherine of Siena has said, “If you are who you should be you will set the world a blaze!” To do this we must be pure of heart, and truly seeking to do God’s will and not our own. “...But for this struggle to be legitimate and holy, no human or person motive or purpose should be mixed with it; it should be roused only by that fire of love Jesus came to cast upon the earth, with the sole purpose of blazing everywhere for the glory of the Father and the salvation of men. Because of this fire of love Jesus anxiously desired the bloody baptism of his passion; because of this fire of love the Christian must be prepared to resist even the persons who are dearest to him, even to separating himself from them, if they impede his professing his faith or carrying out his vocation or accomplishing God’s will.”[16]

Jesus, through His death offers Himself as a bloody sacrifice, a bloody baptism. He offers the Christian however an unbloody Sacrifice in the Eucharist (cf. Malachi 1:11) and an unbloody baptism in the Sacrament of Baptism. Our own baptism is unbloody and our participation in the Sacrifice of the Mass is unbloody, but both if lived will mean martyrdom. This martyrdom could be a red martyrdom (bloody) or a white martyrdom (unbloody), but either way we are obligated to die to self and to live in, with, and through Christ Jesus.

How does Jesus's death and our baptism bring about unity?

“Jesus voluntarily gave up his life out of love for us, and ‘greater love has no man than this, that a man lays down his life for his friends’ (Jn. 15:13). He calls his death a baptism, because from it he will arise victorious never to die again. Our Baptism is a submersion in Christ's death, in which we die to sin and are re-born to the new life of grace: ‘we were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life’ (Rom. 6:4)”[14]

How does baptism set us for a burning desire for God?

When we realize Satan has no hold over us anymore. When we realize we are children of the one true God and the Church that He established is our mother and takes care of us we should have such a joy that it will make us to incredible things! “Through this new life, we Christians should become set on fire in the same way as Jesus set his disciples on fire: ‘With the amazing naturalness of the things of God, the contemplative soul is filled with apostolic zeal. ‘My heart became hot within me, fire blazed forth from my thoughts’ (Ps. 38:4). What could this fire be if not the fire that Christ talks about: ‘I came to cast fire upon the earth, and would that it were already kindled.’ (Lk. 12:49). An apostolic fire that acquires its strength in prayer: there is no better way than this to carry on, throughout the whole world, the battle of peace to which every Christian is called to fill up what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ (cf. Col. 1:24)”[15]

ACTIVITY – Set Afire

In a dark room or even outside a night simply have one person holding a candle lit or a flashlight on. Have a group of people small or large holding unlit candles. The one person will begin to light one candle and then that person will “share” the fire or the flame with people around them. If you have flashlights, have the first person tap the person's flashlight next to them. They will turn there's on and then tap another person's flashlight. After all candles are lit (or flashlights are on), and the room is illuminated a few questions can be asked. **Did the person that originally had the flame lose any fire or energy by giving?** No. When we are on fire for God, we do not lose in giving, but only gain.

What happens the more people give? The light and energy from the light grows stronger and benefits all, since more can be seen. We should not be afraid to share the fire of God, because we lose nothing, and all gain everything. **What is the nature of fire?** The nature of fire is to multiply, illumine, and consume,

image of the peace of Christ, who reconciled heaven and earth. [2304-2305] Peace is more than the absence of war, more than a carefully maintained balance of powers (“balance of terror”). In a state of peace, people can live securely with their legitimately earned property and freely exchange goods with one another. In peace the dignity and the right of self-determination of individuals and of peoples are respected. In peace human coexistence is characterized by brotherly solidarity.[6] Yes peace means solidarity, but solidarity in “good order” of which God is the source. Apart from God there cannot be “good order” nor can there be coexistence in the true sense of the word.

We know that someone can bring pain and division on us, but it cannot affect our peace with God. This does not mean that the separation and division does not affect us. “Such sorrowful separations are truly very painful crosses, but they are directed – like Jesus' own cross – toward the salvation of these very ones who are being abandoned for the sake of his love.”[7]

Does this Gospel message contradict what Jesus says in other parts of the Gospels?

Absolutely not. As stated earlier, the peace Jesus speaks about is that of God's peace. There will be those that are offered the peace of Christ and accept it, there will be those that are offered the peace of Christ and reject it.. Those that reject it may also desire to destroy it. “Although disconcerting at first glance, this statement [Christ's words in the Gospel] neither contradicts nor nullifies all that he had said elsewhere; rather it makes it clear that interior peace, the sign of harmony between God and man and hence of adherence to his will, does not exempt us from struggle, or from war against all that is opposed to God's will or that threatens faith or hinders us in the service of the Lord, whether the obstacles be within us – as our passions, our temptations, our sins – or in our surroundings. In such circumstances the most peaceful of Christians must become a courageous, fearless fighter, afraid of neither danger nor persecution, after the example of Jeremiah and, still more, of Christ who fought against sin even to bloodshed and the ignominy of the cross.”[8]

What if we are not on fire for God? When we do not have our hearts a blazed for God we are setting ourselves up for failure. If we are on fire for God we will have God's peace. When we resist God's peace we bring the discord that Jesus speaks about in the gospel reading. “By resisting, through sin, the redeeming work of

Christ, we become his opponents. Injustice and error lead to division and war.”[9]

How do we have peace and fire for Christ to obtain peace?

The Our Father Prayer that Jesus teaches us is the perfect example of this. Jesus shows us that praying is first and always the Father’s will. There is no peace unless we are doing the Father’s will: “The first series of petitions carries us toward him, for his own sake: *thy* name, *thy* kingdom, *thy* will! It is characteristic of love to think first of the one whom we love. In none of the three petitions do we mention ourselves; the burning desire, even anguish, of the beloved Son for his Father’s glory seizes us: ‘hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done...’ These three supplications were already answered in the saving sacrifice of Christ, but they are henceforth directed in hope toward their final fulfillment, for God is not yet all in all.”[10] Lastly, Jesus tells us to forgive others trespasses. The world will not understand how a Christian can forgive others who have wronged them especially when the Christian has a legitimate reason to hold a grudge. We let go because then we are the ones bringing the division, but not in the right way. We will be bringing division between ourselves and our neighbor, and more importantly, division between God and ourselves.

God’s Burning Love – Lesson and Discussion

“I have come to set the earth on fire”

Jesus says that He has come to set the earth on fire in today’s Gospel reading.

What does “fire” represent? The Catechism says, “*Fire*. While water signifies birth and the fruitfulness of life given in the Holy Spirit, fire symbolizes the transforming energy of the Holy Spirit’s actions. The prayer of the prophet Elijah, who ‘arose like fire’ and whose ‘word burned like a torch,’ brought down fire from heaven on the sacrifice on Mount Carmel. This event was a ‘figure’ of the fire of the Holy Spirit, who transforms what he touches. John the Baptist, who goes ‘before [the Lord] in the spirit and power of Elijah,’ proclaims Christ as the one who ‘will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.’ Jesus will say of the Spirit: ‘I came to cast fire upon the earth; and would that it were already kindled!’ In the form of tongues ‘as of fire,’ the Holy Spirit rests on the disciples on the morning of Pentecost and fills them with himself. The spiritual tradition has retained this symbolism of fire as one of the most expressive images of the Holy

Spirit’s actions. ‘Do not quench the Spirit.’”[11] Why is it that an individual tongue of fire appears over the head of each apostle and Our Lady? This fire of the Holy Spirit is not given collectively, to the group, but rather to the individual soul. There is not one large blast of fire over the whole room, but rather, individual tongues of fire.

What is this “fire” Jesus wishes to set? Jesus wishes to set God’s burning love within each of man’s hearts. “In the Bible, fire is often used to describe God’s burning love for men (cf. Deut. 4:24; Ex. 13:22, etc). This divine love finds its highest expression in the Son of God become man: ‘God so loved the world that he gave his only Son’ (Jn 3:16)”[12] Many times we speak of passion as being “on fire” about something. Love in Greek has three words. Eros or passion. Philio or brotherly love (friendship). Agape or sacrificial love, to lay down your life for a friend. We typically think of the “fire” of love as being passion, but to truly be “on fire” for the one you love is to not just have a passion, but to be willing to sacrifice.

MUSIC – “On Fire” by Switchfoot – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 4:40

<http://youtu.be/-hvelj05jCg>

There is a burning desire from God, but there also is a burning desire within every person to want the love of God. We yearn and desire to be on Fire for God.

MUSIC – “Burning Love” by Elvis Presley – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 2:55

<http://youtu.be/ide7Y9LK6b4>

The burning desire of love can be a strong advantage. It makes us able to do things that we never thought we could. For Jesus, his burning desire for us lead Him to be able to freely give His life on the cross for all of us.

How does Jesus show His burning fire? Jesus’ whole mission on earth is His desire to set the world ablaze. “The desire to embrace his Father’s plan of redeeming love inspired Jesus’ whole life, for his redemptive passion was the very reason for his Incarnation.”[13] This desire of true love for the Father and us is what led Him to be crucified. He had this desire also even to the very end when He said, “I thirst.” (Jn. 19:28) What did He thirst for? He thirsted for each soul, and that each soul would join Him in His death through the Sacrament of baptism.