

## **DO WE PUT GOD AND HIS TEACHINGS BEFORE FAMILY?**

In today's Gospel (Lk 12: 49-53), Jesus declares that He has come to bring fire to the earth. He is speaking of faith, which is like a fire, a living flame, to keep us burning with zeal as His disciples. It is a transformative fire of the Holy Spirit, shaping the soul into the image of Love. Faith enables us to respond to the love Jesus has for us. He thirsts to see the world ablaze with divine love and mercy that sets hearts on fire with divine purpose and compassion. His own Sacred Heart burned with that very fire for His Father, and He invites us to burn with it too. It is a fire that burns not forests or buildings, but rather the clutter of pride, selfishness and sin within us, clearing the way for new life to grow.

### **WHAT IS TRUTH?**

Jesus also tells us that He is bringing division, for the sake of Truth. We are the cause of that division, through our stubbornness, refusing to change our sinful lives, and living by a false truth that opposes the Gospel. At the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple (Lk 2:34), Simeon said; *He will be a sign of contradiction to mankind*. True faith practiced can sadly bring division and conflict within families. As a true Peacemaker, Jesus has come to challenge the sinner, by teaching us the difference between true Peace and false peace. For example, if a parent or sibling who live by their faith, but have members of their family cohabiting in an intimate relationship, outside the sacrament of marriage, then to correct the couple, living in mortal sin, will probably not bring about peace, but create a division within the family, including the in laws. This is because the truth of the Gospel can hurt. True love of God should compel us not to place ourselves or our families above God. To do so is a form of idolatry. Some parents and siblings say nothing and go along with the situation, in order to keep the 'peace', however, this is not true Peace. This is a false peace, promoted by the devil, in order to keep sin alive in the family.

### **MORTAL SIN BARS US FROM HEAVEN**

If God finds us living in a state of mortal sin, when He comes to take us from this world, then we will not be found worthy to enter into the sinless heaven. There will be another kind of fire awaiting the unrepentant soul after death. It is never too late to change one's sinful lifestyle and align our freewill to God's will. We must look after our souls, because it is the soul that lives beyond the grave. It is our choice where we want to live after leaving this world. Heaven or Hell are the options. Our life choices will dictate our future destiny beyond the grave.

### **SIN KILLS THE SOUL.**

Jesus has come to save us all from the fires of hell. He speaks of His distress while awaiting a baptism that He is to receive. This refers to His death, when He will be immersed into a redemptive suffering and a death, but will emerge out of His Passion and Death, as the Risen Glorified Christ. He must first pass through the Cross to enter into glory. For us to be glorified now, we have to detach ourselves from sin. We have to discipline ourselves, and stop sinning, which is a sacrifice that becomes our Cross. We have to stop hammering the nails of our sins into the mystical Body of the Church, and repent. In every confession the Holy Spirit cleanses us from every sin. At the time of our baptism, we were fully regenerated in faith by the fire of the Holy Spirit and made sinless. Sadly, many people are happy to dismiss this gift of freedom and willingly return to the slavery of sin, which will lead to eternal death. That's their choice which will have devastating eternal consequences, beyond the grave. The second reading (Heb12:1-4), tells us *to throw off the sin that hinders us, especially the one that clings so easily*. In the first reading (Jer 38:4-6, 8-10), Jeremiah was thrown in a well sinking in the mud, symbolising the sinner stuck in their own sins. However, all is not lost, the three men who pulled him out to safety symbolises the Triune God, who will draw us out of sin, provided we cry out to Him to be saved. We should ask ourselves today; 'does the faith I profess and celebrate lead me to complacent tranquillity, or does it ignite the flame of witness in me?' God bless, Fr. Brendan.