

Dear Friends,

“I have come to set the earth on fire, and how I wish it were already blazing! 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”. It is a statement which seems unlikely to come from Jesus, the Prince of Peace. The question is, did Jesus bring peace or division? Jesus brought peace. Jesus came to bring peace to this earth, as the angels proclaim at his birth and as St. Paul said, ***“For he is our peace, he who made both one and broke down the dividing wall of enmity, through his flesh...that he might create in himself one new person in place of the two, thus establishing peace, and might reconcile both with God, in one body, through the cross, putting that enmity to death by it.”*** (Ephesians 2:14-16).

So, how does division enter? And why does Jesus tell us that his person and teaching will bring about polarization, hatred, and division? If Jesus is meant to unite us, why does it so often divide us? It is not Jesus’ message that divides, but how we *react* to that message that divides. We see this already at the time of Jesus’ birth. When he was born, some reacted with understanding and joy, while others responded with misunderstanding and hatred. Different reactions to Jesus continued through his life and continues to our time. Jesus is not only misunderstood and seen as a danger by many non-Christians, but his message is used by Christians to justify hate-filled divisions among themselves. Jesus’ message is used to justify the bitterness that characterizes debates on religious and moral issues. Neither Jesus or his message is dividing; people divide themselves by having different reactions to him or his message.

In a few weeks the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) will begin. RCIA is the Catholic Church’s way of initiating new members. RCIA is much more than a program. It is a learning and loving process, in which conversion of the heart brings one to Jesus Christ. It enables people to embrace the Faith for the first time, or it helps those baptized as Catholics to complete their faith formation. Those participating have the opportunity to ask questions about the Church and to hear about the message of Jesus Christ, and how this message is lived out in the Catholic Church. RCIA is an opportunity:

- ***For those who have not been baptized.***
- ***For those who have been baptized in another Christian faith tradition and are now interested in the Catholic faith.***
- ***For those who were baptized in the Catholic faith, but did not receive First Communion and/or Confirmation.***

If you have a non-Catholic family member or friend who would like to know more about the Catholic faith, invite them to RCIA. Come with them to meet some faithful Catholics who love the Lord and would see as privilege to get to know you and accompany you on faith journey.

If you have any question about RCIA do not hesitate to attend one of inquiry sessions: Wednesday, August 17th at 7:00 pm; Sunday August 21st at 9:00 am and 12:00 pm or call parish office (419-332-7339).

With prayers,

Fr. Krzysztof Kardzis

