



The Prince of Peace wants to set the world on fire? This Sunday's Gospel can sound more intense than what we may be accustomed to. It's a passage of contradictions. Jesus so clearly prays for unity, yet here he speaks of division. Why would our God who comes as an offering of love speak so frankly about causing relationships to be torn apart? The sobering truth is that Jesus is divisive. We see this throughout the Gospels, as the Pharisees critique him, the Romans condemn him, and not everyone in the crowd is enthusiastic about his words. Jesus has not come for the purpose of dividing, but what he does is so radical that it upends the status quo. And it doesn't end with his preaching and miracles! "There is a baptism with which I must be baptized." Jesus isn't talking about his baptism at the Jordan River, which has already occurred, but the passing through the waters of death on the Cross and rising again to new life in the resurrection. This is divisive stuff! Christ's spiritual fire turned the "fathers" - the Jewish people and Pharisees - against the "sons" - the common people. Not everyone wants the Gospel Jesus is preaching. Not everyone wants to be set on fire with the desire to love others. Some prefer to put on a warm sweater and curl up in front of the TV.

In living and loving as Jesus did, we, too, might ruffle some feathers. In disciplining our teenage child for sneaking out, we may cause some division (temporarily, we hope!). In standing up to gossip and the spread of cruel rumours in our workplace, we might cause division. In emphasizing the dignity of both the desperate mother and the unborn child, we might cause division. Not everyone wants the Gospel Jesus is preaching. Not everyone wants the Gospel we are invited to live. But that's no excuse not to live it.

#### CATHOLIC QUOTES - WORDS TO INSPIRE THE FAITHFUL

"Reverence is the pole on which the world turns."

- Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

#### LIVE THE LITURGY - INSPIRATION FOR THE WEEK

Our baptismal rite instructs the parents and godparents of the newly baptized children, "May they keep the flame of faith alive in their hearts." Faith has often been associated with fire. While fire can be useful and welcomed as a source of light and warmth, it can also be devastating and destructive. The Gospel is very much like this. On the one hand, Jesus speaks of healing, liberty, mercy, and forgiveness. On the other, he challenges the secular mindset and ideology, risks opposition, and pushes people out of their comfort zones. We are more attracted to things that make us feel better about ourselves. **Equipped with the flame of faith, are we willing to see the bigger picture and risk popularity and self-preservation in favour of the kingdom of God?**

### KIDS' CORNER

When you talk about Jesus, you will probably get a strong reaction from people. Some people love Jesus with their whole heart, and their lives really show it. Other people don't want to follow Jesus, and talking about him may even make them angry. Families and friends can be torn apart by that anger. No matter what, stay close to Jesus, and he will stay close to you.



**EVERYDAY STEWARDSHIP** - Recognize God in Your Ordinary Moments  
Set the Earth on Fire - My wife can get so invested in a sporting event where one of her favourite teams is playing that she sometimes must leave the room due to the stress. That is heavy-duty investment! I remember her on the sidelines for our son's soccer games or our daughter's lacrosse games. Her emotions were intense, and she cheered loudly for her children. She never yelled at a referee because it wasn't about them. It was about wanting to see her children, or her favourite team, achieve something great. Her passion was fuelled by love and her connectedness to something or someone. When we look at our Church, we need to see greater passion. Sometimes that passion is there, but many times, we approach our discipleship as just another aspect of who we have become. It needs to be more than that. As we call ourselves Christian, we need to "put on Christ" so that a world in need sees not us, but Jesus. By being serious about our discipleship and living as transformed Everyday Stewards, we bear witness to the power of Jesus Christ. Jesus said in Luke 12, "I have come to set the earth on fire." Those words sound pretty emotional to me! If we are to be like him, then we need to set the earth on fire. We need to be bold and proclaim the Good News without apology. By our actions of love and justice, we need to show the world that with the Body of Christ on earth, it is not business as usual. Surely our emotions about these things should trump the emotions we have about a sporting event. We need to ask ourselves what truly sets us on fire.



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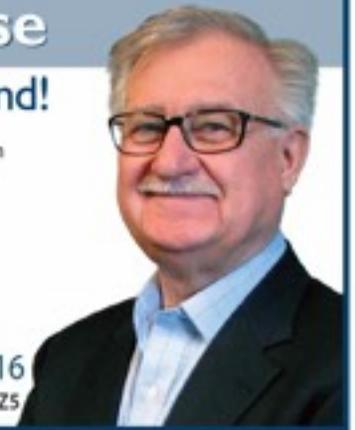
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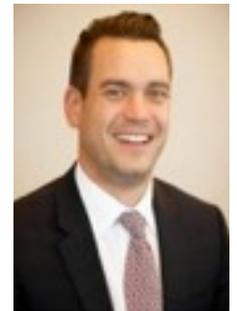
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