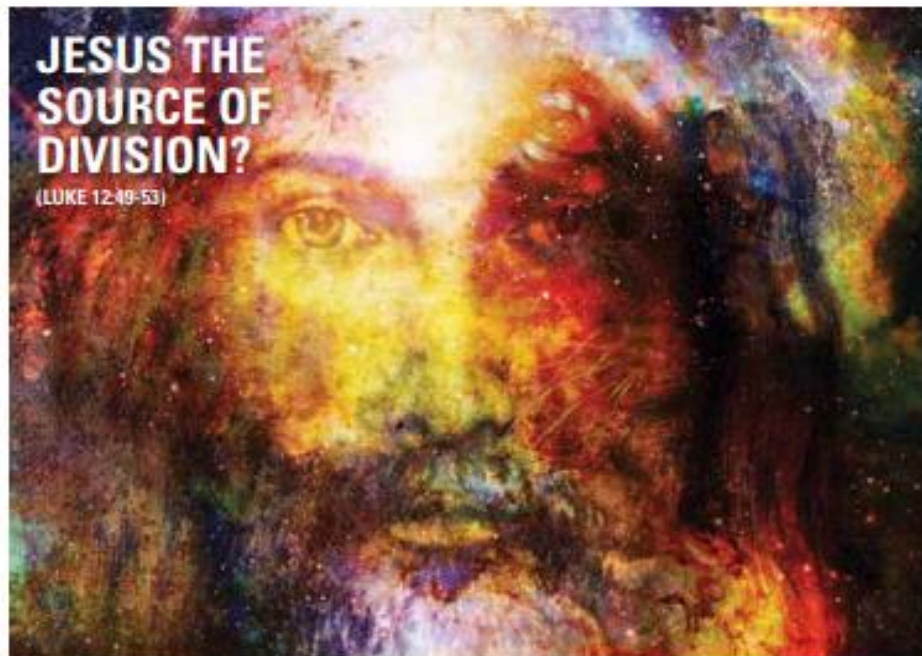


JESUS THE SOURCE OF DIVISION?

(LUKE 12:49-53)



Luke presents Jesus as a prophet, the bearer of the Word of God. People are challenged to make a decision: do they accept the prophet and the prophet's message or not? However we understand the opening sentences of today's Gospel reading, there is no mistaking the urgency with which Jesus sees himself and his mission.

Jesus is not encouraging or approving family quarrels or disputes. He is saying, as a prophet, that people have to decide where they stand in regard to himself and his message. This will inevitably lead to disagreements, even splits, within family and other close relationships. But this is a consequence of individuals deciding for themselves whether they accept Jesus and his preaching. It is a matter of faith and theology, the person's understanding of God, not of human domestic or personal relationships. ■

REFLECT

Often, the image we have of Jesus is a compassionate, perhaps harmless, teacher of religion. The idea that Jesus could promote fierce arguments within families or the wider community does not figure in most people's imagining of the Gospel narrative. In some ways, it is a reversal of the picture of the prophet who brings about reconciliation between members of different generations.

In recent years, we have seen deep division developing in different parts of the world over political questions. People have been identifying themselves with positions, often defined by simplistic slogans, and refusing to listen to, consider, or discuss the points of view of others. This is not the teaching of the Gospel. We are encouraged to talk to each other, to listen respectfully to others' opinions, to

disagree if we feel differently but, above all, to remain on a friendly and mannerly level of civility.

Within the church community, there are lively debates about all sorts of issues. For many people, it is distressing to see accusations of bad faith being levelled at those who hold a different opinion. It is even more hurtful when individuals do not have the moral courage to stand up for their point of view, but resort to (anonymously) reporting others for what they consider unorthodox opinions – without having to undergo any process to justify their claims. Their accusations are accepted by church authorities as valid, and the person accused has to defend themselves against anonymous accusations. How do you disprove a negative?

SAY

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
(attributed to St Francis)

LEARN

In biblical terms, a trial was not meant to establish the guilt of the person accused:

The purpose of the public confrontation was to bring about an admission of guilt and the reconciliation of the parties involved.

Jesus is not condoning family quarrels or ongoing resentments.

To accept Jesus and his teachings may bring about family or social divisions: this is the (often unfortunate) result of prophetic preaching.

DO

Do you have a grudge or resentment against somebody? Sort it out!



Jesus, in line with the biblical tradition, teaches the doctrine of reconciliation. The process requires the person initially to confront the other with the perceived wrongdoing: if that does not resolve the issue, then the wider community becomes involved, but the desired result is not the conviction of an offender, but the restoration of the relationship.

Perhaps in our church community, we need more of this biblical vision of restoring relationships. But peace at any price is not the teaching of the Scriptures. If someone decides not to remain within the community, then God will accept their decision. Jesus asks us all to decide where we stand. ■

Parishes of Dromara and Drumgooland

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14th August 2022
20th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Weekend masses Sat 6:00pm Dechomet 7:30pm Leitrim Sun 9:00am Gargory 11:00am Dromara Feast of Assumption of Our Lady into Heaven Mon 15th August Masses will be at 9:00am in Leitrim and 7:30pm in Dechomet Masses as usual Tues-Fri Tues 9:00am Dromara Wed 7:30pm Leitrim Fri 7:30pm Dromara Recently deceased Lily Sweeney, Belfast Michael O'Prey, Dublin Eileen McAleenan, Ballymaginthy Thomas Fowler, Castlewellan Anniversary Masses Leitrim Sat 13 th Bernard and Ellen Cunningham Wed 17 th Francis, Margaret, Sean and Margaret Cunningham Martin McDonald Sat 20 th Bernard Cunningham John Doyle and Deceased Family Members Gargory Sun 14 th Michael, Brigid, Leonard and Liam King James McAleenan Dromara Sun 14 th Deceased Members of McKinny Family (Artana) James McAteer Sun 21 st Elizabeth McCoubry (Derry) Alice Lundy and Deceased Members of McCann and Mageean Families Dechomet Sat 20 th Marcella Doyle		<table><tr><th>Collections</th><th>Dromara</th><th>Drumgooland</th></tr><tr><td>Parish</td><td>£815</td><td>£1675</td></tr><tr><td>Priest</td><td>£616</td><td>£1185</td></tr></table> St Patrick's Missionary Society, Kiltegan Thank you to all who made donations or subscriptions to the missionary appeal. £152 was passed onto them from the envelopes handed in over the last few weeks. Congratulations to Neil O'Higgins and Ciara Marley, Michael Brennan and Liliano Robeiro, Sinead Maguire and Phil Cafolla, Caoimhe Doyle and Stuart Burns, who were married recently. Finnis St Vincent de Paul Weekly collection will commence on Sun 21 st Aug. Thank you for your generosity throughout the year. New volunteers are urgently required for Finnis SVDP, training will be provided. If interested, please contact 07738 838191. Whist restarting in St Michael's Hall, Finnis on Tues 6 th Sept at 8:00pm. Adm £5. Please support.			Collections	Dromara	Drumgooland	Parish	£815	£1675	Priest	£616	£1185
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