

Chaplain's Bulletin October 5, 2025



Dear Folks,

It is the work of Satan to tear people apart. It is the work of Jesus to reconcile, and we have been entrusted with that work. "All this has been done by God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ and entrusted us with the ministry of reconciliation. In other words, God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, and not holding people's transgressions against them, and he committed us to the message of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18-19)".

Here's a twist: Jesus said, "Do you think that I have come to bring peace to 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... (Luke 12:52-53). "But what about "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God (Matthew 5:9)" and "Peace I leave you, my peace I give you (John 14:27)." What are we to make of this?

What about this? In this world torn by sin and division, the only road to peace and unity begins by uncovering the division. Where Jesus went, there was division between those who accepted His teaching and those rejected it, often fiercely. I suggest that Jesus did not create the division, but He revealed the division that was already in their hearts.

There are many dysfunctional families in which problems are not addressed, they are not talked about, and people pretend they don't exist. Then they get worse. This is not peace. Avoiding conflict does not make it go away, and when it festers, sometimes there is a blowup.

When surgeons heal, they must first cut. To be sure, they cut very carefully and precisely; they don't just slice haphazardly. It is all directed toward healing, and they know how to do it. Furthermore, they try to cut as little as possible, while doing the most healing. Incisions for the same kind of surgery gotten smaller as medical science has advanced.

I've seen a lot of conversation in social media that seems like just slicing haphazardly: lots of insults, name calling, and attacking.

If I criticize someone in a way that makes them think, "this person hasn't tried to understand my position, and what he says misses the point" then it's guaranteed that I will not be able to persuade him. In fact, I've reinforced his belief by my unpersuasive argument.

Imagine someone out there who disagrees with me but is open to reason. What in my words has a chance of getting him to think a new thought, ask a new question, or see things from a different angle? How would my words sound to that person?

Recognize there is a disparity between how I hear myself and how others hear me. Being attentive to people's reactions can give us a hint of what they heard, and how it might differ from what we intended to say. We will make mistakes. It is hard. It can be painful. Of course, reading the Gospels makes it clear there is no way to be a disciple of Jesus without some pain. It's easy to complain, to insult people, to call names, but seriously engaging is hard work. Consider, if you could reduce the friction in your car's motor so that it went twice as far on a gallon of gas and the parts took twice as long to wear out, what would that be worth? How much more valuable with the members of society.

Blessings

Fr Jim