

Eternal Father, it is your will that all should be saved. Great is your mercy. Your Son, Jesus Christ, died for all. Teach all people to recognize you and love you.

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There is something inherently captivating about watching controlled destruction, the intricacy and power of a building exploding or crash test of cars produces an awe and brings an audience. It's why we still watch firework shows and Marvel Movies. But once controlled destruction becomes uncontrolled, becomes unplanned, our relationship and interest to that disaster is either one of fear (if it directly affects us) or empathy (if it affects those around us). Take the obvious example of the pandemic, of all those reports far away that then came to our shores, an uncontrolled force that very little could be done about.

Awe and fear are emotions that should strike us with what the Gospel has for us today. Our Lord was, by His own admission, a pyromaniac, "I have come to set the earth on fire, and how I wish it were already blazing!". The Church, His Kingdom, is that wildfire which sweeps across the globe. A controlled burn from the perspective Divine providence, but an inexplicable and dangerous disaster from the perspective of the world. It is a two-edged blade that cuts against the world's expectations and priorities while at the same time giving us, who have been called according to His will, salvation and every spiritual blessing. Our Lord's Kingdom, His

Church, divides a household of five, as the Gospel records, “three against two and two against three; a father will be divided against his son and a son against his father, a mother against her daughter and a daughter against her mother, a mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.” Although, that last one, about mother-in-law and daughter-in-law might have already been the case. The point is that the division even within familial relations runs deep when it comes to following God’s will. It was even true for Our Lord, who had attempts made on His life by those from his hometown (for a prophet is not without honor except within his hometown).

If this is the case on the microscale, but much more on the world scale. I am always amused when there are calls for peace throughout the world, but peace for the world is the last thing Our Lord promises, “Do you think that I have come to establish peace on the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division.”

The point of this chaos is not for itself, but to bring about a peace that will last, a peace that Our Lord promises He will give as He says elsewhere in the Gospel. “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”

This peace might not come as we expect it to. There are twists and turns to every vocation and walk of life that a Christian lives. I live far away in California from my homeland and family for the sake

of the Gospel. This is something that divides son from father. A vocation is a divine calling, something that cannot be explained, but it can be requested.

“Send forth, O Lord, labourers into your vineyard and spare your people.” This parish has prayed this prayer for as long as I can remember. A call to set fire to the world, for new preachers of His word to rise up. We ask for new vocations to priesthood, and in doing so, we ask for men, to lay aside the world and to take up something wonderful, an explosion of grace. At most Masses of Thanksgiving, you get to hear a newly ordained priest give thanks about a life that he knows nothing of. I now stand here after one completed year of priestly service. I know personally what a great gift the priesthood is. How many hundreds of Masses have been said, how many thousands of confessions have been heard, how many homilies and retreats have been already given. Even particularly for myself, I served in all five Covid wards in South County, bringing the last sacraments to countless dying. Thank you for praying for vocations, my vocation is a gift of this parish, and I think it has begun to set fire to the world, well at least it burns in a place that already burns with great frequency on account of wildfires. But this is something that I and countless others whom you’ve never met have benefited from.

This is just it. The fire and division that Our Lord calls for in today’s Gospel puts to death the limits of this world, and extends

beyond what we can imagine. Your prayer might cause a rise in vocations and other graces won in places you cannot see and do not know of, but we can be sure that Our Lord hears and answers them according to His desire to see the world converted, “how great is my anguish until it is accomplished!” Continue to fight for the faith, to persevere in prayer, so that one day by sending labourers into his vineyard, his people might be spared, so that united with him and the Father and the Holy Spirit, we may all rejoice forever and ever. Amen.