

23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

My brothers and sisters, you do not need me to remind you, that we are now living in a time that totally rejects any form of authority. This trend began in Berkley, with the Berkley riots in the Spring of 1970. This was followed by one upheaval after another; and it is still going on today, and ever more violent! It was founded upon the complete rejection of any authority, whether from parents, society, or from the Church and the Gospels; however, Jesus insists upon the moral authority of the Gospels, the Word of God, and, the Church! So much so, that He teaches His Apostles, who will be the first leaders of His Church, that they should deal with members of the Church who fall into sin and cause scandal to be firm in calling them to responsibility and accountability! Jesus is referring especially to the kind of sin that affects the whole of the community directly!

In our times and in our society, we are being told, and our children are being taught, that tolerance is the highest value. If we teach the Church's values about justice, or charity, or about sexuality according to the plan of God written into our very bodies, we are told that we are intolerant! Indeed, some priests in Canada and in Europe are now in prison because they simply taught what the Church teaches! This is not the perspective of Jesus! Jesus teaches us to be kind, gentle, loving, forgiving, and patient with the sinner; but He also calls the sinner out of sin and back into righteousness, because, sin is real, and it is destructive, both to the sinner and to the whole community!

In many places, Jesus teaches us about the destructive nature of un-repentant sin; because sin is a destructive fire that starts in a person's soul and ends in destroying their humanity and dignity and the humanity and dignity of the whole community. If it is not put out quickly, as we are reminded by all of the forest fires and the smoke around us, it spreads quickly out of control and that spiritual forest fire can destroy whole communities! Jesus loves us too much to allow us to smolder and then burst into flame! That is why He instructs His Apostles and His Church throughout the ages, to do everything possible to bring the sinner back into the saving embrace of grace and mercy! Only when the person or group refuses fraternal correction, or the correction of the Church, only then are they to

be publicly denounced in order to isolate the destructive fire! Jesus reminds us that it is the duty of good shepherds to actively go out and seek the lost who have strayed, bringing them back rejoicing!

My brothers and sisters, that is why I am always recommending the power of the Confessional to people! This Sacrament was given to the Church as a healing remedy for sin, to quench and destroy the fires of hell, at the first Resurrection Appearance of the Lord! There are many today, who reject this Sacrament; but they are rejecting the very teaching and gift of the Lord for our Salvation, the Divine Mercy! There are some who say: "I don't know what to confess; or, I don't have any sins to confess." Ask your husband or wife or children, they will be happy to tell you!

My beloved brothers and sisters, the Good News of the Gospel is about our salvation from sin and death! Our Good God wants us to succeed, to be the Holy People He has created us to be- let us take Him seriously!