

Families Living the Gospel

Though Many, One: PART 1

These days, more often than not, my heart feels broken. I am broken hearted about the state of our nation. For most of my life, our country has been one of intense political polarization and I am starting to realize that it might be this way for a long time. My heart and soul urge me to resist falling into despair and to stand up for love, goodness mercy, and to never give up hope, but it is so hard to not give in.

I can barely watch the news, it gives me anxiety and leads me deeper into the hole of hopelessness. Did that really happen? Is this real life? Who is reporting the truth? What can we believe? I have to stay off social media. I have been witness to too many relationship ending debates between my own friends and family. That place of cute baby pictures and hilarious cat videos has become a political and moral shouting match that is just too loud for me. And most heart breakingly scary of all, I hear loud talk and subtle whispers of disagreement and judgment in our Church, right here among the pews of St. Jude. Is that what it looks like to be Catholic now? Does the faith we profess only apply when it matches up with our politics? These days I am left with lots of questions, not many answers, and only fleeting glimpses of hope.

So what can I do? What can we do? How can we cope with the unrest?

We turn to Jesus of course.

“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30).

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you” (Matthew 5:1-12).

Jesus knows what it's like to be in the middle of polarizing political debate and he shows us that love can win. We must turn to Him. We must put our hope in the Lord. We must pray for our nation. We must respect the image of God found in the faces of our neighbors, strangers, and friends.

Over the next few weeks, I will be sharing an article about a conference attended by over 80 Church leaders that was held in June at Georgetown University. Over the course of their meeting, both progressive and conservative leaders discussed how the Church's witness to the Gospel can help society rise above polarization.

Stay tuned, stay hopeful.

-Katie Neu, Director of Lifelong Faith Formation

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