

Kingdom Fire and Foes

'I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already blazing...Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, division' (LK 12:49, 51).

As we proceed in our 40 days together, I am grateful for answered prayers.

The Bishops' Youth Synod concluded with a 60-page text that roundly rejected the use of any LGBT+ language. On one hand, a victory.

On the other, the Church that stays true to her noble ethic must ignite sinners with an empowered Gospel—the witness of the living God who transforms them. Jesus wants to encounter us afresh with His declaration: 'The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the good news!' (MK 1:14). The Spirit invites us to marvel anew at this 'new teaching, and with authority!' (MK 1: 27), what St. Paul described unflinchingly as 'the whole will of God' (Acts 20:27). Do we still believe that Jesus is able to raise the disordered into lives of splendid chastity?

I urge us all to pray for the Spirit to consume our sound teaching, like fire blazing from hard wood.

Here we must name the barriers that prevent the pure fire of the Gospel from burning in our midst. In humility, we pray for:

Zero tolerance for any priest found guilty of manhandling children, and any bishop who covered for him. Here the state is helping us. The US federal government has undertaken an investigation of many dioceses, including one in Buffalo that is heart-rending in its allegation of a standing bishop who played 'god' in selecting which abusive priests under his charge could remain hidden and active. The Church that protects her honor and resources over the well-being of children invites demonic oppression.

Consistent discipline and clear channels of restoration for all priests and bishops who cross sexual lines with adults of either gender. These sinners mock chastity, abuse power, scatter the sheep, and throw a wet blanket on the fire of transformation. The sexual sin of leaders hinders those who aspire to authentic purity. Porn addiction and unchaste relationships (often in the form of weird emotional bonds) need to be faced squarely by leaders whose bishops also provide restorative care for them. Please pray that Living Waters might provide a safe place for clergy to resume the journey to chastity. Pray for almighty mercy to prevail over judgment in their lives. Today's climate of abuse exposure makes it extra-hard for clergy to admit moral vulnerabilities, let alone outright failures.

Empowered, holy women to take their places in the Church. We cannot know the whole truth without feminine wisdom and discernment. The Synod called for a 'courageous cultural conversion' in the church regarding the female voice and vote. Let it be so, Lord. Becoming

sexually whole is meaningless without women.

Bold and relevant witnesses of how to 'live the truth in love' (Eph. 4:15). We say we want to reach young people but with few exceptions (Christopher West's Theology of the Body Institute being one) we have done a rotten job at translating our truth for new generations. The only way to break the formalism that besets most Catholics? Earthy witnesses of what Jesus can actually do: persons who articulate their messes and the splendid order acquired through confession, Eucharistic worship, and discovering chastity together. Jesus has power to make crooked lives pure and upright. Yet we rarely hear such voices. I've attended the second biggest parish in my city for nearly a decade, and have yet to hear such a witness. And this in an hour when God is exposing the Church's sexually immoral secrets. Pray for us to expose boldly and well our lives of beautiful chastity!

Kingdom fire in the Church is our freedom. But her flame smolders—not blazes-- due to abuse, sexual sin among clergy, and the absence of feminine wisdom and earthy witnesses in our midst. Pray for the Spirit to burn what is foul, rouse what is true, and ignite our blazing torch of salvation.

We are currently in a time of prayer and fasting. If you'd like to pray along with us, let us know and we can send you a [book](#) or you can get it through kindle here: <https://www.amazon.com/Becoming->

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