



## Saint Joseph Catholic Church

P. O. Box 365 117 South Main St.

Loreauville, Louisiana 70552

(337) 229-4254

FAX (337) 229-4255

Rev. Barry F. Crochet, Pastor

Rev. Godwin Nzeh CMF, Associate Pastor

Deacon Christopher Doumit, Pastoral Assistant

[pastor@stjosephparishonline.org](mailto:pastor@stjosephparishonline.org)

[stjosephparishonline.org](http://stjosephparishonline.org)

### MASS SCHEDULE [TEMPORARY]

Saturday Vigil Mass — 4:00 p.m.

Sunday — 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m.

Monday and Friday — 6:45 a.m. at Our Lady of Victory

Wednesday — 6:45 a.m. at Saint Joseph

Tuesday and Thursday — 5:30 p.m. at Saint Joseph

First Saturday — 8:00 a.m. at Our Lady of Victory

### SACRAMENT OF CONFESSION

Every Saturday from 3:00 p.m. to 3:40 p.m. and one-half hour before all weekday Masses, or by appointment during office hours.

### OFFICE HOURS

Monday through Thursday — 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

If possible please conduct parish business by phone or email.

### RECEPTIONIST/BOOKKEEPER/CEMETERIAN

Mrs. Gail Borel — [gail.borel@stjosephparishonline.org](mailto:gail.borel@stjosephparishonline.org)

### RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Mrs. Sherry Hebert — [sherry.hebert@stjosephparishonline.org](mailto:sherry.hebert@stjosephparishonline.org)

### EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

The Adoration Chapel is closed until further notice. The Main Church is open from 7:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday for your convenience.

### FUNERALS

A Funeral Service in church without Mass will be celebrated along with a graveside service at the cemetery.

### SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Baptism will be celebrated with godparents and immediate family only. Those with compromised immune systems should not attend. Families may opt to delay the baptism until the whole family can gather in celebration. In the case of an emergency Baptism is always permissible.

### SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY

Weddings are to be celebrated according to the Rite for celebrating marriage outside of Mass with immediate family only. Engaged couples may wish to consider rescheduling their weddings, if possible.

### SACRAMENT OF ANOINTING OF THE SICK

“Anointing of the Sick will remain available as needed by the faithful.”



Gladden us with holy joys, almighty God,  
and make us rejoice with devout  
thanksgiving, for the Ascension of Christ  
your Son is our exaltation, and, where the  
Head has gone before in glory, the Body is  
called to follow in hope.

### ***Please pray for our parish family members who are sick:***

We invite you to submit the names of people who are in need of our prayers.



Lisa Adcock, Kendall Romero, Joseph Huval, Marie Lee Prioux, Troy Barras, Kelly Ransonet, Jessica Scott, Mary Smith, Brian Thibodeaux, Jackie Savoy, Barry Thibodeaux, Doris “Boutte” Barras, Michele Dugas Burke, Paul Crochet, Craig Breaux, Helen Simon, Ross Rouly, Jamie Brady, Holly LeBlanc, Faye Gary, Tony Berard, Glenn Romero, Stuart Sandoz, Duffy Domingue, Eric Clements, David Louviere, Hayden Ransonet, Trevor Louviere, Vanessa Courville, Wayne Louviere, Austin Willett, Willey Poirrier, Inez Barras, Helen Bastian, Butch and Debbie White, Guy

Thibodeaux, Lydia May, Louis “CoCo” Landry Jr, Jerry Fruge, Jimmy Clifton, Rowena Borel, Megan Scully, Maxine Latiolais, Dawn Derouen, Falyn Sonnier, Rickey Sonnier, Caline Provost, Patricia Freyou, Lecia Broussard, Jason Walker, Michael Theriot, Roshondra Nora, Noah Abraham, Jimmy LeBlanc, Chad Borel, Sophie Bonin, Ashley Hebert, Stephen Dugas, Bonnie Hebert, Jon-Luke Lancon, Jade Delcambre, Doris Prados, Gail Louviere, Pat Villermin., Ira Bourque, Hailey Thomassee, Lon Prioux.

*Please note that our office will purge the names on our sick list every quarter. We ask anyone who lists someone's name to please call the parish office to add or remove a name.*

**Instructions with Regard to Mass Attendance**

This temporary Sunday Mass schedule is subject to change with regard to civil authorities. The temporary Sunday Mass schedule is as follows:

Saturday - 4:00 p.m. — Last names beginning with A - G only

Sunday - 8:00 a.m. — Last names beginning with H - N only

Sunday - 10:00 a.m. — Last names beginning with O - Z only

*Division by last name is due to state Fire Marshall regulations which impose a 25% occupancy limit for our buildings.*

All Masses will be livestreamed on YouTube at:

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCB5E10COR9\\_IfoQhZ7MtRQ](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCB5E10COR9_IfoQhZ7MtRQ)

The Ushers will be seating everyone according to the instructions that they have been given by the bishop. Entrance into the church is by the front center doors only. Please cooperate with the Ushers as only the pews marked with blue tape will be used. Phase I Reopening requires a limit of 25% occupancy of our buildings. Please help us in this endeavor.

At the end of Mass the Ushers will be dismissing everyone in an orderly manner using all doors to prevent crowding. Please be patient and cooperate with them by following their instructions.

Persons who are ill (fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, loss of taste/smell etc.) as well as those with preexisting conditions should not attend Mass. Also, persons over 65 years old are at a higher risk of experiencing worse symptoms than others if they contract the coronavirus virus and should consider not attending Mass.

All Catholics in the Diocese of Lafayette remain dispensed from their obligation from attending Sunday Masses. You may fulfill your spiritual duty on any day of the week.

State regulations require that persons in public gatherings are required to wear masks or face coverings. Please bring your own pocket/purse supply of hand sanitizer.

The Priest and deacon will function as Eucharistic Ministers until further notice. They will also fulfill the other ministries as well.

For the distribution of Holy Communion, the priest and deacon will go out to the people. **Please do not leave your pew.**

As governmental guidelines change these guidelines will be changed.

The Weekday Mass schedule has been changed. Please make note:

Monday and Friday - 6:45 a.m. at Our Lady of Victory

Wednesday - 6:45 a.m. at Saint Joseph

Tuesday and Thursday - 5:30 p.m. at Saint Joseph

Weekday Livestream Mass on YouTube - 10:00 a.m.

**Parish Offices will be closed on Monday for the Memorial Day Holiday**

**Please pray for our priests, seminarians, deacons and religious**

Eternal Father, we lift up to You these special sons and daughters. Sanctify them. Heal and guide them. Mold them into the likeness of Your Son, Jesus, the Eternal High Priest. May their lives be pleasing to You. In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen.

May 24	Rev. Andre Metrejean/Riley Maturin Dcn. Harry Darce/Sr. Mary Lucille Stelley, SSF
May 25	Rev. Mark Miley/Stephen Melancon Dcn. Kenneth David/Sr. Martha Readore, SHSp
May 26	Rev. Thomas Montelaro/Rev. Mr. Connor Poirrier Dcn. James Davis/Sr. Pius Blanchard, MHS
May 27	Rev. Michael Moody, SVD/Michael Vidrine Dcn. Daniel Didier/Sr. Hilda Mallet, MHS
May 28	Rev. Randall Moreau/Nicholas Ware Dcn. Sammy Diesi/Sr. Diane Dornan, MHS
May 29	Rev. Jason Mouton/Cole Zaunbrecher Dcn. Chris Doumit/Sr. Micha DeHart, MHS
May 30	Rev. Joseph Nasser, SJ/Dylan Allen Dcn. Keith Duhon/Sr. Clare Aucoin, MHS

**Saturday 4:00 p.m.** — Ken Segura, Andrew “Toupee” Bonin, Katie Boutte, Gerald Vaughn, Glenn Clifton, Paul H. Johnson, Lester Delaune, Darrell Judice, Walter and Doris M. Judice, Gloria and Sam Delcambre and Family, Landry and Champagne Families Ancestors and Descendants and Souls in Purgatory, Pope, Priest, Religious, Protection from and end to Corona Virus, Aymar “Poon” and Beulah Dugas, Ide Dugas Family, Alexis Laviolette Family, Wayne LeBlanc, Lily Mae and Alvin LeBlanc, Otto Sr. and Laurence Girouard, Terradot Family, Theresa Girouard Allen, Clarence Champagne Family, Robert Prados Family and Breaux Family, Chad Romero, Deyna Champagne, Audrey Crochet, Jordan Prince and Special Intention, Joseph Dressel, Barry Eldridge and Ned Broussard Families, Melvin Dugas, Roy Sr. and Gladys Berard, Forbus and Myrtle Mestayer Sr., Granger and Mestayer Family, Ronald, Sr. and Mildred Gonsoulin, Leed and Mabel Gondon, Fred Laviolette, Louis and Grace Moran, Virginia Frioux, Lennet and Marie Antoinette Crochet, Clenie and Eve Segura and Billie, Sally Domingue, Cabrol and Domingue Family, Martha Escagne Rodriguez, Lloyd Broussard, Claude and Felicie Granger, Nancy Broussard, Clarence and Hilda Landry, Billie and Armanee Barilleaux, Kay Dooley and William and Dolores Dooley, Earl Mestayer, Kim Decuir, Chris and Annie Decuir Family, Benjamin Decuir Family, Ron and Jana Angelle Family, Michael Decuir Family, Ossie Romero, Jr, Sue Crochet.

**Sunday 8:00 a.m.** — John Michael Steiner, Jay Gonsoulin Family, Paul Sonnier Family and Clyde Warfel Family, Loto and Leah Louviere, Antoine “Boy” LeBlanc Family, Mr. and Mrs. Johnny Albert Sr., Champagne and Landry Families Ancestors and Descendants and Souls in Purgatory, Pope, Priest, Religious, Protection from and end to Corona Virus, Maude Granger, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Granger, Dr. Raymond Schneider, Elaine Schneider, Skip Schneider, Lolly Harbin, Breaux and Delcambre Families, Lenwood Delcambre, Emus Borel, Gwen Borel, Chataignier Family, Joe and Rita Habetz, Mary Kay Habetz, Tom Voorhies, Onis Cormier, S.J. “Bute” Granger and Junius and Mary Hebert, Catherine Defelice and Tracey Defelice Guilbeau, Suzette Judice, Audrey Crochet and Jordan Prince, Ruben Rogers, Elizabeth Capps Rogers, Wayne Rogers, Alfred Crochet, Claude Hebert, Cecile Hebert, Deacon Jay Bergeron, Archbishop Harry Flynn, Sue Crochet.

**10:00 a.m.** — Mike Judice, Suzette Judice, Antoine Judice Family, Alvin and Faye Tauzin, Edmonia Tauzin, Marcel and Nadage Broussard, Jimmy Eldridge, Elaine Plessala and Eldridge Family, Cheryl Segura, Pliny Walet Family, Agnes Breaux, Louis and Elbay Judice, Boots Thomas, Joe Boudreaux and Justin Boudreaux, Katie Boutte, Sandra Angelle and Glenn Angelle, Percy Granger, Alvaro Jimenez, Robert Lawrence, Shelton Joseph and Ella Mae Desormeaux Freyou, Ruben Rogers, Elizabeth Capps Rogers, Wayne Rogers, Alfred Crochet, Claude Hebert, Cecile Hebert, Deacon Jay Bergeron, Archbishop Harry Flynn, Sue Crochet.

**Monday 6:45 a.m. OLV** — Landry and Champagne Families Ancestors and Descendants and Souls in Purgatory, Pope, Priest, Religious, Protection from and end to Corona Virus, Ruben Rogers, Elizabeth Capps Rogers, Wayne Rogers, Alfred Crochet, Claude Hebert, Cecile Hebert, Deacon Jay Bergeron, Archbishop Harry Flynn, Sue Crochet.

**Tuesday 5:30 p.m. Stjo** — Landry and Champagne Families Ancestors and Descendants and Souls in Purgatory, Pope, Priest, Religious, Protection from and end to Corona Virus, Ruben Rogers, Elizabeth Capps Rogers, Wayne Rogers, Alfred Crochet, Claude Hebert, Cecile Hebert, Deacon Jay Bergeron, Archbishop Harry Flynn, Sue Crochet.

**Wednesday 6:45 a.m. Stjo** — John Michael Steiner, Landry and Champagne Families Ancestors and Descendants and Souls in Purgatory, Pope, Priest, Religious, Protection from and end to Corona Virus, Ruben Rogers, Elizabeth Capps Rogers, Wayne Rogers, Alfred Crochet, Claude Hebert, Cecile Hebert, Deacon Jay Bergeron, Archbishop Harry Flynn, Sue Crochet.

**Thursday 5:30 p.m. Stjo** — Audrey Crochet and Jordan Prince, Landry and Champagne Families Ancestors and Descendants and Souls in Purgatory, Pope, Priest, Religious, Protection from and end to Corona Virus, Ruben Rogers, Elizabeth Capps Rogers, Wayne Rogers, Alfred Crochet, Claude Hebert, Cecile Hebert, Deacon Jay Bergeron, Archbishop Harry Flynn, Sue Crochet.

**Friday 6:45 a.m. OLV** — Landry and Champagne Families Ancestors and Descendants and Souls in Purgatory, Pope, Priest, Religious, Protection from and end to Corona Virus, Judice and Walet Families, Ruben Rogers, Elizabeth Capps Rogers, Wayne Rogers, Alfred Crochet, Claude Hebert, Cecile Hebert, Deacon Jay Bergeron, Archbishop Harry Flynn, Sue Crochet.

**The Sanctuary Lamp is burning for:**  
Special Intentions

**The Vocation Chalice is in Church**  
*Please pray for vocations. If you would like to have the vocation chalice in your home please call the rectory office at 229-4254*

**The Bi-Monthly Statue is in the home of**  
Carroll and Harriette Boudreaux

**The Weekly Statue is in the home of**  
Carolyn Walet

**Saint Joseph Altar Candles are burning for**  
Delcambre and Breaux Families, John Michael Steiner  
Chad Romero and Deyna Champagne, Charles and Jackie Poirrier Family  
Landry and Champagne Families Ancestors and Descendants and Souls in Purgatory  
Pope, Priest, Religious, Protection from and end to Corona Virus  
Special Intentions, In Thanksgiving

## On John Paul II's Centenary by George Weigel

As the world and the Church mark the centenary of the birth of Pope Saint John Paul II on May 18, a kaleidoscope of memories will shape my prayer and reflection that day. John Paul II at his dinner table, insatiably curious and full of humor; John Paul II groaning in prayer before the altar in the chapel of the papal apartment; John Paul II laughing at me from the Popemobile as I trudged along a dusty road outside Camagüey, Cuba, looking for the friends who had left me behind after a papal Mass in January 1998; John Paul II, his face frozen by Parkinson's disease, speaking silently through his eyes in October 2003, "See what's become of me ..."; John Paul II, back in good form two months later, asking about my daughter's recent wedding and chaffing me about whether I was ready to be a *nonno* (grandfather); John Paul II lying in state in the Sala Clementina of the Apostolic Palace, his features natural and in repose, wearing the battered cordovan loafers that used to drive the traditional managers of popes crazy.

Each of these vignettes (and the others in my memoir of the saint, **Lessons in Hope**) has a particular personal resonance. Two, I suggest, capture the essence of the man for everyone on this centenary.

It was March 2000 and I was in Jerusalem with NBC to cover the papal pilgrimage to the Holy Land. For weeks, a global controversy about the pope's impending visit to Yad Vashem, Jerusalem's Holocaust memorial, had

raged. What would he say? What should he say? What *could* he say?

I found out two days before the event, when, on a drizzly Tuesday evening, I walked past the Old City's New Gate to the Notre Dame Center, where the papal party was staying. There, a friendly curial official slipped me a diskette with the texts of the pope's speeches and homilies during his visit. Back in my hotel room, I went immediately to the remarks prepared for Yad Vashem. As I read them, I felt a chill run down my spine.

At Yad Vashem itself, on March 23, the sight of the octogenarian pope bowed in silent prayer over the memorial hall's eternal flame quickly muted the world's pre-visit argument and speculation. And then came those unforgettable — and stunningly appropriate — words: "In this place of memories, the mind and heart and soul feel an extreme need for silence. Silence in which to remember. Silence in which to make some sense of the memories that come flooding back. Silence because there are no words strong enough to deplore the terrible tragedy of the *Shoah* [the Holocaust]."

Some days later, I got a phone call from an Israeli friend, Menahem Milson, a former soldier and distinguished scholar who had seen a lot in his life. "I just had to tell you," he said, "that Arnona [his wife] and I cried throughout the Pope's visit to Yad Vashem. This was wisdom, humaneness, and integrity personified. Nothing was missing. Nothing more needed to be said."

The second emblematic memory from that papal pilgrimage came on March 26 when John

Paul walked slowly down the great esplanade before the Western Wall of Herod's Temple, stopped at the Wall, bowed his head in prayer, and then — like millions of pilgrims before him — left a petition in one of the Wall's crevices: *God of our fathers, you chose Abraham and his descendants to bring your Name to the nations; we are deeply saddened by the behavior of those who in the course of history have caused these children of yours to suffer, and asking your forgiveness we commit ourselves to genuine brotherhood with the people of the Covenant. Amen. Joannes Paulus PP. II.*

These two episodes give us the key to understanding Pope Saint John Paul II. He could preach solidarity, embody solidarity, and call people to a deeper solidarity because he was a radically converted Christian disciple: one who believed in the depth of his being that salvation history — the story of God's self-revelation to the People of Israel and ultimately in Jesus Christ — is the deepest truth, the inner truth, of world history. John Paul II, who was likely seen in person by more people than any human being in history, could move millions because the grace of God shone through him, ennobling all whom its brightness and warmth touched.

That was the key to the John Paul II effect: radiant, Christ-centered faith.

*George Weigel is Distinguished Senior Fellow of Washington, D.C.'s Ethics and Public Policy Center, where he holds the William E. Simon Chair in Catholic Studies.*

## The Gift of John Paul II by Stephen P. White

Monday, May 18, marks the 100th anniversary of the birth of Karol Wojtyła. Pope Francis will mark the occasion by celebrating Mass at the saint's tomb in Saint Peter's Basilica. Other celebrations, many planned long in advance, have been curtailed by the pandemic. Even without the pandemic, however, the centenary might strike some of us as anti-climactic. What happened to the "new springtime for the Church" we were promised?

I am old enough to remember the enthusiasm and vitality of John Paul II's early pontificate. Here was a man of parts: A mystic who survived the assassin's bullets, a philosopher-priest who bested the Communists, and a young reformer who returned a semblance of stability to the Church after the tumultuous years following the Second Vatican Council.

Above all, here was a Christian disciple whose confidence and charisma emanated from a source even more attractive than the man himself.

I am also young enough to realize that many Catholics who are my age or younger remember

Pope John Paul II in a different way. He was to them — if they have any living memory of him at all — a frail old man, whose physical infirmities may have been evidence of interior sanctity and redemptive suffering. But those infirmities also serve, especially in hindsight, as a kind of metaphor for the state of the Church and the world he left upon his death.

By the time Pope John Paul II died in 2005, the notion of the End of History was, itself, most definitely at an end. History, with a capital "H" was back with a vengeance. And the ecclesial confidence which was one of the hallmarks of the John Paul II Generation had been deeply shaken — and in some cases, shattered — by the abuse crisis of 2002 and the subsequent, slow realization that ecclesial free-for-all of the late 1960s and 1970s had not gone away for good.

The release of the Vatican report on Theodore McCarrick — if and when it is released — is likely to bring our attention back to such matters. McCarrick was already a bishop when Karol Wojtyła was elected in 1978, but it was John Paul II who appointed him three times to successively larger and more influential sees. And he gave McCarrick his red hat in 2001.

The Church should not be afraid to take an unflinching look (with all the humility appropriate to those who would judge the past) at what Pope John Paul II got wrong and what he got right. And why.

We know that reports of at least some of McCarrick's offenses had reached Rome by the time he was made Cardinal. Were those red flags simply ignored, or dismissed as unsubstantiated rumors? Did those reports ever reach the pope, or were they filtered out by those around him who could have done so? These are some of the questions we can only hope the McCarrick report will help to answer.

No answer to these questions is likely to reflect well on John Paul II. Ultimately, the failure to detect, let alone discipline, McCarrick's perfidly happened during his pontificate, and under the noses (possibly even with the complicity) of those the pope trusted to help him guide the Church.

John Paul II also deserves some credit, however. Many of the policies we think of as baselines for dealing with abuse were initiated under John Paul II. For example, the implementation of a "zero-tolerance policy," which was first granted here in the United States

*(Continued on page 4)*

(Continued from page 3)

in 1994 (and was in force nationally as of 2002) was a drastic step — one that is still not in force universally in the Church today.

And in 2001, the pope made sure that cases involving sexual crimes committed by clergy against minors were reserved exclusively to the jurisdiction of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. That same year, he did something no pope had done before: he publicly apologized on behalf of the Church for clerical sexual abuse.

Taking such steps might seem the obvious course of action to us in 2020, but they were significant and even underappreciated changes

at the time.

And it is worth remembering, too, that instances of abuse began to fall precipitously in the United States just after John Paul II was elected. Some credit for this goes to John Paul II for the way he reshaped seminary formation, (especially through *Pastores Dabo Vobis*), his theology of the priesthood, and the kind of priestly fatherhood he modeled personally.

Pope Francis has promised to “follow the path of truth wherever it may lead.” I say those of us who have benefitted so greatly from John Paul II’s accomplishments — and from his intercession now — ought to be equally willing to learn from his failings, too. It would be a pity

if we were not so willing. We have nothing to lose and much to gain from the truth.

Next week, I plan to celebrate with gratitude the centenary of my beloved JP2. I will ask his intercession for the Church he loves so well, even as I ponder on two of his more frequent admonitions: “Be not afraid.” And, “The truth will set you free.”

Pope Saint John Paul II, pray for us.

*Stephen P. White is executive director of The Catholic Project at The Catholic University of America and a fellow in Catholic Studies at the Ethics and Public Policy Center.*

## Is Religion Divisive?

by David G Bonagura, Jr.

Religion gets a bad rap in our secular, selectively judgmental society. The Dictators of Relativism claim that religion — and by that they usually mean Christianity — ought to be discarded because it is “divisive.” It separates people by forcing them to take sides. Lately, the old canards of the Crusades, the Inquisition, the European wars of religion, and religiously motivated imperialism have been joined by claims that religious services are *immoral during the coronavirus threat* and that calls to prayer *distract from the real work of containing the virus*.

From these accusations, old and new, the Dictators of Relativism conclude that society would be more peaceful and more united without religion and religiously inspired opinions to divide citizens from each other.

Given the realities of past religious conflicts and the current threat of coronavirus, it’s fair to consider their question: Is religion socially divisive?

Of course, it won’t help, when engaging the Dictators of Relativism, to point out that Christianity has been the greatest force for unity the world has ever seen, bringing together in harmony all sorts of peoples that had nothing else in common. For every religious war, history can find a dozen examples of Christianity uniting, not dividing, whole societies and the disparate peoples within them. And lately, so many selfless workers and volunteers have been working to stop the coronavirus and help the sick, precisely because they are motivated by their religious faith.

Nor will it help in debating the Dictators to note that the moral principles of Christianity — obedience to the Decalogue, adoption of the cardinal virtues, charity towards others, fostering of family life and education, stewardship of the environment — are precisely what any sane society would want — and would need — to flourish.

Nor are they moved by the obvious truth that secular societies have generated more than their share of conflict over the centuries. The French

Revolution, Communism, and National Socialism are secular ideas that claimed to unite everyone under a single cause but instead caused horrible conflict, deep division, and extensive bloodshed.

No, we must answer the question on their terrain, amidst the mines planted against us.

As the prophet Isaiah foretold, Jesus Christ is the “Prince of Peace” who famously preached — and then showed during His Passion — that we should “turn the other cheek” and “love your neighbor as yourself.” That seems to be a formula for civic peace, if there ever were one.

Yet before He died, Jesus warned the apostles that “you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.” (John 15:19) Hatred, a forbidden attitude in many quarters today, causes division, and Jesus clearly anticipated the animosity His disciples would face. If not, He would not have prayed to the Father that “they may be one, even as we are one.” (John 17:11)

Finally, the Lord, Who defined Himself as “meek and humble of heart,” also made this arresting statement:

Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man’s foes will be those of his own household. He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and he who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. (Matthew 10:34-38)

Is Jesus plainly saying that He came to be divisive and that those who profess His name are as well?

The answer, properly understood, is yes.

Jesus’ peace is not a facile civic tolerance by which everyone pretends to get along for fear of

punishment. His peace, as Saint John Chrysostom explains, is “when the disease is removed, when the cancer is cut away. Only with such a radical surgery is it possible for Heaven to be reunited to earth.” That is, the peace Jesus brings is the Truth, the only basis for a just civic unity. Only Truth has the authentic power to guide society because it cuts away dangerous ideas that can lead a people to ruin.

Should Christianity be banned from society, then, since, by its founder’s own admission, it divides people?

The real problem is not religion, but ourselves who, with minds clouded by sin (the real cause of division in our world), cannot always clearly perceive — or want to perceive — the Truth. Real unity is the house built on the rock of Truth, which is personified in Jesus Christ.

Knowing our weaknesses, Christ has sent the Holy Spirit to guide His Church so we could get His teachings right. Individuals may misperceive the Truth, including those within the Church, but the Church as an entity will not fail. Wars of religion are caused not by the true religion, but by individuals acting wrongly in religion’s name.

So we reply to the Dictators of Relativism: You do not want division because you do not want Truth. And you do not want Truth because you want to set the world according to your personal caprice, which is the disease that Truth seeks to remove. The popular slogan, *articulated* first by Pope Paul VI, runs, “If you want peace, work for justice.” But there can be no justice without Truth on which justice depends. Jesus Christ, the pope concludes, is our peace.

Christianity is divisive precisely because it exists to heal the world of a still deeper divisiveness: the separation of society from truth. The accusation of the Dictators of Relativism is precisely backward: A society that rejects Christianity is a house divided against itself that cannot, eventually will not, stand.

David G. Bonagura Jr. teaches at Saint Joseph’s Seminary, New York. He is the author of *Steadfast in Faith: Catholicism and the Challenges of Secularism* (Cluny Media).