

THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURES

August 18, 2019

Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Jeremiah 8:4–6, 8–10 † Hebrews 12:1–4 † Luke 12:49–53



Reflection by: Anne Whalen Cerchio, OPA

Luke has quite a furious explanation of Jesus' purpose. "I have come to bring fire on the earth," division among families. But, first, he must be baptized. Jesus asks, "Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division." It's a long way off from the peaceful, loving Jesus of most of the Scriptures. Where is our benevolent Savior?

Water and fire—the most elemental, necessary forces on earth. We cannot survive without them. Are the words of Jesus threats? No, they are a portent of things to come. He will be baptized and will tell all that he is the Son of God who will redeem the world. Now, just that message alone set the world he lived in on fire. There were those who believed it was a fire of love and hope. For those who had a lot to lose—power, money, political stance—they were fighting words. So, Jesus was right. The world He lived in was set on fire! The world He lived in became divided.

It seems the world is like that still. Fear, hatred, prejudice are at an all-time high. How can we battle these forces in our day to day life? We begin through the waters of baptism and then hit the streets with the Good News. We spread the Good News by our actions. We live lives filled with compassion and hope. We breathe in and out with surety that we are God's children sent to set the earth on fire with love, strength, and joy.

Water and fire—can't live without them!