

In the Name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

The battle lines are drawn. It is no minor tussle. It is no game. It is war. The spoils are your soul. And the enemy will do anything to win. He lies, he twists words, he deceives, he prays on your every weakness. And when you fall into his trap, you are more than his prisoner. You are fighting for his side. By your sins you make more soldiers for the devil.

The Words of our Lord are clear. In this fallen world there is no middle ground. There are no fence-sitters, there no undecideds, there is no luke warm. You are either hot or cold. You are either with Christ, or you are with the devil. There is no one in between. You must choose a side: Christ, or the devil.

The problem is, of course, that because you have flesh, you have sin. And in sin, you cannot choose Christ. So Scripture teaches that you cannot of your own reason or strength believe in the Lord Jesus Christ or come to Him. You are conceived and born an enemy of God.

“He who is not with Me is against Me”, the Lord says. A house divided against itself falls. It is not a veiled parable difficult to understand. It makes perfect sense, even to fallen reason. When soldiers of the same army turn their weapons on each other, it makes the victory of the enemy sure. So false teaching, bad practice and apathy in the visible church give the devil a foothold. Inside the visible church there are those who are against the Lord of the Church.

“He who is not with Me is against Me.” This teaching of the Lord should cause each of us to examine ourselves. Consider your thoughts, the things you have said, the things you have done, the things you have not done. By word and deed have you clearly shown yourself to be with the Lord? Or have doubt, fear, anxiety, pride and anger revealed that another has prevailed in your flesh?

The Apostle’s Words are words for you – “...fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting... for you know that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and God.”

Have you stood up in the face of the lies of this fallen world and boldly proclaimed the Truth? Or have you left yourself with so little knowledge of God and His Word that you cannot give a defense? Have you proven by your words and actions that you are fighting for the enemy?

The Lord describes a war. The enemy, the devil, does not rest. He, his fallen angels, and his demons fight against the Kingdom of God. They especially attack those who fight for the Kingdom of God. They attack through lies and falsehoods, through teaching antichristian doctrine, through secularists who deny there is a God.

They want to create doubt and confusion about the Bible, to cause you to question if it is indeed the Word of God. So they spew what the father of lies used to trick the first man and woman, the “false news” of Eden. It is not only that they want you to get it wrong. They want their lies to inform what you believe, to inform your faith and life – which is to say that they desire the spoils of the war, which is your eternal soul. So the Apostle writes “...let no one deceive you with

empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.”

Hear then the Prophet Jeremiah: “...amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the Lord your God.” And hear the Word of the Lord, your Redeemer: “...blessed are those who hear the Word of God and keep it.”

The Lord taught those who doubted “...if I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the Kingdom of God has come upon you.” And so, by that Divine Finger, the Holy Spirit, the Pastor spoke over you these Words: “Depart, thou unclean spirit, and make way for the Holy Spirit!”

The unclean spirit that imprisoned you has been cast out of you. But your house, swept out and put in order, has not been left empty. God, in His mercy, has given His Spirit to fill you, that you be the temple of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of love, the Spirit of life, the Spirit of holiness.

Thanks be to God, a stronger Man has come. He alone is all-powerful, omnipotent. He is Divine. God Himself took on Flesh to be the strongest Man, to defeat the enemy. He demonstrated His Divine strength in weakness. He who is Glory suffered shame. And the victory He won for you, He won in an apparent loss. The strongest Man allowed weak and sinful men to overcome Him, to slander and blaspheme Him, and to put Him to death. His victory is gained in what seems to be defeat.

For that stronger Man, the strongest Man, won the war. He conquered by His death and resurrection. He showed Himself to be stronger than death, stronger than sin, stronger than the enemy satan. He overcame death, your death, and He descended into hell to proclaim His Eternal Victory. And His Victory He makes yours, simply by trusting in Him, by putting your hope in Him, by hearing and believing His Word. He offers you forgiveness, salvation and life. You hear His Promise, and that Promise works faith in you. Believing, the Victory is yours.

Thanks be to God, Christ is the strongest Man, the one who prevails over satan and his demons. It is He that fights for you. It is He that wins the Victory you could not win. And it is He that takes you, the spoils of that Divine Victory, out of the clutches of the enemy and brings you into the Kingdom of God by the indwelling of His Spirit. So you are the Holy Church, the True Church, in which there is unity and peace, consolation and help, strength and comfort, forgiveness and salvation. By His grace, you are with Christ.

It is here, in this Holy Mass, that He gives you that which you need to defend yourself against the assaults of the devil - the truth, the righteousness, the Gospel of peace; faith, salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. He vests you in the panoply of holiness, His holiness.

So you are not a Kingdom divided. You are a child of God, a citizen of His Kingdom. You have unity, Communion with God and with one another. You eat of the One Body, you drink of the One Cup, and you who are many are made One; One in Christ your Head, One in faith, One in salvation and life, One in Christ's Victory. So rejoice, dear Christian, take and eat, take and drink, for surely the Kingdom of God has come upon you.