

Dear Padre,

A friend told me not to worry about salvation because we're predestined to be saved or condemned. Why try to be a good person if God has already decided where I'll end up?

The idea that some people are predestined to be saved and others are damned is contrary to Catholic teaching.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* says that "when therefore [God] establishes his eternal plan of 'predestination,' he *includes in it each person's free response to his grace*" (600; emphasis added).

The *Catechism* (1038) also cites the parable of the separation of the sheep from the goats, in which the sheep and goats are separated not randomly, but based on their actions: "When the Son of Man comes in his glory...all the nations will be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father'....And [those on the left] will go off to eternal punishment" (Matthew 25:31-46).

God wants to save all people. The way we respond to God's gift of salvation is called *free will*. Unfortunately, not everyone accepts that gift.

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A WORD FROM Pope Francis

Jesus says, "I came to bring division." It is not that Jesus wishes to split people up....Following Jesus entails giving up evil and selfishness and choosing good, truth, and justice, even when this demands sacrifice and the renunciation of our own interests. And this indeed divides; as we know, it even cuts the closest ties.

ANGELUS, AUGUST 18, 2013



Our Parish Community

August 14, 2022

Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)

Jer 38:4-6, 8-10

Heb 12:1-4

Lk 12:49-53

A House Divided

One of the heaviest burdens people are forced to carry is the distress of "a house divided." When Abraham Lincoln said "a house divided against itself cannot stand," he was referring to the division within the country during the Civil War. We experience a similar, though not as lethal, separation when our two-party system of government engenders obstinate division—not merely acceptable political diversity. Perhaps the most heartbreaking example of a house divided is a family in which members are alienated from each other.

There are as many reasons for family division as there are families. Reasons include the betrayal of one member by another, inheritance disparity, parental favoritism, sibling rivalry, to name a few. One might think that those involved should be able to resolve such differences—after all, isn't blood thicker than water? On the other hand, how are serious family rifts to be repaired if the reason for division is one's faith or commitment to God? That is the situation that Jesus describes today.

We might wonder how faith in God can tear families apart. It often happens when someone leaves the religion of one's family and converts to another tradition. This might be judged as a betrayal of the family's values. This may be what many of Jesus' Jewish followers faced when they claimed that Jesus fulfilled their religious expectations while other family members did not share their belief. That was a terrible price to have to pay for fidelity to their faith, but they paid it.

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

FOR Reflection

✦ What steps might you take to heal a family rift? What's keeping you from taking them?

