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Fr. Danny Murphy – 20th Sunday of the Year 2016

Today we're going to reflect on one sentence from today's Gospel. Jesus, the Prince of peace tells us: "I've come not to establish peace but rather division." Before we do that, let's have a brief look at a sentence from today's first reading from Jeremiah: "Jeremiah sank into the mud." Don't we all have days like that – days when we feel overwhelmed, defeated, broken, done? Days when we can say with Ralph Kramden: "That's it! I quit!" Days when we gather up all our will power to get up and get out of bed and keep up our spirits during the rest of the day. When we feel "stuck in the mud," what should we do? I have three suggestions: First, think of something for which you can be grateful. Gratitude might provide a reliable rope to lift us out of the cistern. Secondly, think of someone who loves you. Being loved is of enormous help to help free us from being stuck in the mud. Thirdly, talk to God because prayer shows us the way out of the mud.

Now for our Gospel reflection on Jesus not bringing peace but division. In John's Gospel

we hear Jesus say that I am the way, the truth and the life." Anyone who has the courage to speak the truth will not establish peace, but rather bring division. In Jesus' society and OUR society there seems to be little tolerance for too much truth. If we have the courage to live the truth and speak the truth we might be thrown into the cistern like Jeremiah or even be crucified like Jesus. This might not happen literally, but socially. We might be tempted to justify our silence in the face of truth. Don't rock the boat, keep the peace at all costs. Jesus, however did not come to establish peace, he came to set the world on fire and even wished it was already blazing! Why are we keeping Jesus waiting? How long will he wait? How long will we keep silence? You may not agree, but it seems to me that our society is sinking into the mud in front of our eyes! Here are a few examples: inequality, injustice abound around us and are seldom challenged. Marriage is mocked, purity seems to be a forgotten virtue. Politicians and athletes lie in our faces, they lie until they are caught. Celebrity figures spend so much money while others go hungry or are homeless. And in my opinion the annual Fourth of July hotdog eating contest in Coney Island is a disgrace. To give an award to the person who consumes the most food in the least amount of time while kids go hungry is flat out wrong! Why do we keep silent? Perhaps we don't want to appear to be old fashioned, or don't want to have the label of being intolerant. Have we become so politically correct that we have turned tolerance into live and let live? Would Jesus have spoken thusly? No, he spoke out, took risks, paid the price and so must we! False tolerance knows no peace, it will never set the world on fire because it demands that we approve all that I say and do. Christian tolerance is more difficult because it says: "I'm going to love you even when your bad behavior is offensive." False tolerance costs nothing. Christian tolerance could cost you everything. We Christians adhere to the old proverb: The candle said to the darkness: "I beg to differ!!" Jesus says to the darkness: "I beg to differ!!" And if the darkness is offended, so be it! "I have come to set the earth on fire, o how I wish the blaze were already ignited." How much longer will we keep him waiting? How much longer

