

I'd like to thank everyone who helped out while I was gone the last few weeks, especially Tammy Mallen and our staff, Father Aloysius Kasoma and the other priests, and Maureen Foster and the building committee. My trip went very well, considering how tense some of it was.

I bring greetings from Father Michael O'Shea and everyone from the other St. Munchin Church in Limerick, Ireland. I presided and preached at all the masses there my first weekend away. Since then Father O'Shea has been reassigned to St. Mary Magdalene Church in Monaleen just outside Limerick. It was an emotional time for him and the people of St. Munchin's.

I then attended the meeting of the International Commission on English in the Liturgy, which is working on a new English translation of the prayers we use at mass. The work is not yet finished, but it is already controversial.

That was evident at the Societas Liturgica conference I attended in Sicily. This meeting gathers specialists in liturgy from different Christian churches. When the mass first went into English in the late 1960s, the Catholic Church consulted with other Christians to arrive at one English translation for some parts of Sunday worship we hold in common. For example some other Christian churches use the same Glory to God, Creed, and Holy, Holy that we do. Today, though, the Catholic Church is not consulting experts in other faiths on our new English translation, and this causes some hurt among other Christians.

Meanwhile, the St. Munchin building project that I thought was all set to launch when I left here 4 weeks ago hit a snag. Some questions and opinions have surfaced, and I look forward to addressing these with you all this week.

All in all, it is fitting for us to hear Jesus tell his disciples about disagreements. He says, "Do you think that I have come to establish peace on the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division." Whenever Jesus spoke, he challenged people to rethink their values. Not everyone wanted to change, and this caused division. Jesus expected these disagreements.

Luke probably included this story because he knew some families who were divided over Jesus. Some members believed in him; others did not. Even today, if you have a strong faith, and a member of your family chooses not to participate at church or to observe the morals that you hold, you know firsthand how painful this can be. It hurts because good Christians order their lives around their faith. They love their church, and they love their family, and when the two do not fit together, the division is hard to bear. By its nature, religion causes division. Yet, by their nature, beliefs must be expressed. In this gospel Jesus does not expect us to overcome the disagreements that religion provokes; he does ask us to have faith and to speak about it. Faith may not be able to end division; it may even cause it. Faith should make people think about what they believe, how they act, and why.