

Many of you might know that the Pope came out with a teaching about marriage in a document called "*Amoris Laetitia*" which means "*The Joy of Love*". It has not been without controversy as part of it speaks about those who are divorced and remarried.

This document has stirred up a lot of confusion. One Bishop saying it means one thing, another Bishop saying it means another. One Cardinal saying it means one thing, another Cardinal saying it means another. The Pope's words themselves are not clear, making the confusion even more pronounced. To be honest, I haven't read the whole thing yet. It's very long.

But this is not the first time in the history of the Church where confusion reigned concerning a matter of belief. We have an example of it in the 1st reading today. There was a dispute in the early Church. The first Christians were Jews, and as they preached the Gospel, Gentiles also heard them and wanted to be Christians.

So the big question was: Do these Gentiles, these non-Jews, need also to become Jews (get circumcised, follow the Jewish law) before they become Christians? Some said yes (Peter), some said no (Paul) and so the Apostles and the priests get together in council, the first Church council to call on the Holy Spirit to lead them to the truth on this question. The Reading gives us the result of that: Gentiles do not have to be circumcised and follow the Jewish law to become Christians. This is an example of the words of Jesus spoken to us in the Gospel: Jesus promises the Holy Spirit to lead the Church into all truth so when some controversy of faith or morals arises in the Church, we can have absolute trust in the Holy Spirit, the promised gift of Jesus, to lead the Church into the truth.

However, this promise doesn't mean that it won't be messy. There is another example of this from the 4th century. Nearly all the Bishops of the Church fell into heresy, believing the Arian heresy that Jesus was not God. Eventually a Church council is called to settle the question, The Council of Nicea. The Holy Spirit led the Church to proclaim the truth of the full divinity of Christ. So the confusion leads to God clarifying the truth of the Faith through the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will lead the promise of Jesus, the Church, into all truth.

In the present confusion about marriage, we can have absolute trust in the Holy Spirit to lead the church into all truth. We don't know how this will happen. We don't know when, and it could be messy in the meantime with even some Bishops and Cardinals believing and teaching things that the Church has never taught nor held as true. But we can never despair the help of the Holy Spirit, the promised gift of Jesus, who will lead the Church into all truth.

Given by Father Mark Gurtner at Our Lady of Good Hope Catholic Church, Fort Wayne, Indiana, on the 6th Sunday of Easter, 2016.