

Pastoral Council
Thoughts For Reflection
January 17, 2016

Who are the Children of God?

Who are the children of God? Aren't all human beings God's children?

Well, no, we are not. And no major religion, with the exception of Christianity, has ever had the nerve to call God "Abba, Father." The Catholic Church means something quite specific, and something unique when she states, "We are children of God."

The fact that God creates all people does not automatically make us His children. God has one Son, who is Jesus Christ. Through faith and Baptism we become joined with Jesus. We become part of God's family, a part of the Body of Christ. We become adopted brothers and sisters of Christ, and only then do "we have the confidence to say, 'Our Father...'"

So, aren't all people who believe in God the children of God?

By no means. We don't become the children of God by resignation to Buddha, or by swearing fidelity to the sinful man, Mohammed; and certainly not by denying Jesus' divinity. Note that the Jewish, Buddhist, and Moslem faiths all deny that Jesus is God. Moslems, in particular, say that Christians are guilty of blasphemy for proclaiming the divinity of Jesus.

Who is a liar, but he who denieth that Jesus is the Christ? This is Antichrist, who denieth the Father, and the Son. (1 John 2:22)

Those are strong words from St. John, and it is not my purpose to inspire dissention or discord in the world. I have friends who are Jewish, friends who are apparently Buddhists, and friends and even some family members who are devoutly Moslem. These are all good people, concerned with the well being of their families and conditions in the world. It is tempting to think that they have their own path to the Father and don't need to hear about Jesus. But Jesus sent his disciples into the world, in the face of great danger, to proclaim the truth: *I am the resurrection and the life. And again, I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*

In this Year of Mercy, the Church must emphasize the necessity, lovingly and gently, of reminding all mankind that the only route to salvation is through Christ Jesus. It is Mercy itself, that infinitely loving response of God to the sins of all mankind, that calls us to become "Children of God," through faith in Jesus Christ by way of Baptism.