

Two recent experiences I've been thinking about: a few weeks ago the company my brother works at had its IPO – Initial Public Offering. It started to sell its stock publicly. In the weeks running up to that day the company's officers went around the country on a "Road Show." That is, they went to many cities speaking to potential investors in their stock, hoping to convince them to buy a lot of it. The company created a video to show to these investors, and I watched the video online. All the officers, including my Brother, took part. I was struck. Most weren't sales-types – but they were so clearly invested and believed in what they were doing.

Second, I'm still digesting the protests, violence, and death in Charlottesville last weekend. You know the basics. Thousands of neo-Nazis and white-supremacists marched through town leading to brawls, many injured, and one dead. I saw a link here I'll share in a minute.

In our first reading God tells Isaiah, "[M]y house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples." This is interesting because throughout

their history the Jews made a crucial distinction between the Jews and Gentiles, in keeping with God's original promise to the Chosen People to be their God. But, even so, there was always a thread of the Jewish faith, as here in Isaiah, that looked forward to a day when all people would come to Jerusalem as one.

We need to remember this backstory to understand today's Gospel. When Jesus says, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the House of Israel," this can sound exclusive, but He is referring to God's plan to begin His saving work among just one community, the Jewish People. Jesus, during His public life, formed the beginning of the Church from among those who already have some conception of the Messiah. That's why at this point He's limiting His ministry to the Jewish people. Jesus makes an exception today in curing the faithful Canaanite woman's daughter, but this openness to the gentiles would come front and center only after Pentecost, when the new Church goes out to baptize all the nations.

Today I want to preach about that idea: the universal nature of the mission we're on as Disciples of Christ, and its vital importance for the world. Looking at that video my Brother's company created made me question myself. As Jesus' Disciples, we're meant to go on a Road Show ourselves. The Catholic Church "went public," had its own IPO at Pentecost. Now everyone can and should be part of the Body of Christ for their own happiness. How are we Catholics doing at selling that?

One of the things that makes me most nervous about being a Pastor has nothing to do with budgets or personnel conflicts. What troubles me most is that I have some responsibility for all the souls in southern Kirkland. I sometimes I act as though I'm only the Pastor of the people who come through our doors each week, but that's not true. According to the Catholic Church I am the Pastor of every single soul living within the boundaries of the parish, Catholic or not. I'm on for presenting them with the truth of Jesus and His way. And at the end of my life Jesus is going to ask me about them. How hard did I try to let

them meet and know Him? But you're on for the same thing! I know as a Pastor I have certain additional responsibilities in this area. But every baptized Catholic is on for helping everyone in our community meet and know Jesus better.

And here I come back to Charlottesville. I hope I don't have to say this, but just to be crystal clear, the Catholic Church teaches that racism, the idea that any particular skin color or set of physical traits is superior to others, is ludicrous. And the Nazi ideology is evil and contrary to the teaching of Jesus at every level.

But the violence in Charlottesville is just one instance of a deeper problem. Society seems to be fraying. Too many of us are confused, anxious, and frightened. And in response we're acting out violently and reverting to some very destructive and sinful impulses.

And here I come back to God's long-term plan to make all peoples one, and our need for the Gospel's teaching about the human person. As a society, we have drifted away from this faith that tells us who and

why we are. We have lost the truth that we are all valuable and have meaning in our lives no matter what our nationality, skin color, gender, or class, because we're made in the image and likeness of God. The world needs that message because it leads to living for the common good. But the world is not hearing Jesus' teaching clearly from us, and it's falling apart without it.

We Catholics sometimes speak about evangelization in terms of what it can do for us spiritually as individuals, or what it can do for the Church. That's all good. But the most important reason to share the gospel is because of what the gospel can do for those who are confused, depressed, and anxious without it – without knowing Jesus.

Maybe you're thinking, "But I'm not the salesperson type." But it doesn't matter. The point is – do we believe in what we're about, and what we're doing? Those people at my Brother's company aren't all extroverts. But it sure looked like they believed and are invested, and that made them credible witnesses. Belief and faith in Jesus' message

will also make us credible witnesses. My Brother was just selling a vision of a business. We're supposed to be selling salvation and peace. And woe to us – but also woe to our whole society -- if we don't.

I'm not saying we pressure or insult those not already in the Catholic Church to join. But if someone in our neighborhood doesn't know Jesus, they should encounter Him through us. They have the right and the urgent need to hear the real answer to their fears and anger. Catholics are not meant to be a separate people anymore, we haven't been since Pentecost. We're meant to think big and look outward. So, what are we as Catholics doing to reach out to the rest of Kirkland and all society? The world is going crazy without Jesus. Does that matter to us?