

# Reflections

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## Jesus, Division and Contradiction

If we observe the world today, we distinguish two types of persons.

**1. The adapted/adjusted man.** He suffers from a grave and universal illness: mass-mindedness (a Schoenstatt word). Therefore, we can also call him the mass-man. He thinks what he thinks because others think it; he says what he says because others say it; he does what he does because others do it.

He is a slave to what is said in the newspapers and on TV, to the opinion of his party, to fashion because “one must be in style.” The mass-man does not think for himself and does not decide by himself. He is dragged down and carried away by others. For that reason he does not have personality nor an inner life.

Perhaps we too should look at ourselves in that mirror of modern man. We would probably find some of our traits in it.

**2. We could call the other type of man the man-contradiction.** He is the man against mass-mindedness, the man who is fully free who can think and decide for himself. Because of it, he is able to assume responsibilities, commit himself, and be faithful.

He is an outstanding personality, but he is also a man who disturbs and clashes, who baffles and challenges, and who swims against the current. And it is because he acts according to his own conscience and not according to public opinion. But that also gives him true peace, inner enlightenment, a great serenity.

Model for this fully-realized man, for this new man, for this man-contradiction is Jesus Christ himself. In Him and in his message, the spirits are divided. When He is still a child, already there are prophecies about Him: “Behold, this child is destined for the fall and for the rise of many in Israel, and for a sign that shall be contradicted.” (LK 2, 34) And at the end of his life, the leaders of Israel accuse Him before Pilate with these words: “We found this man misleading our people.” (LK 23,2) The life of Jesus is not a tranquil one nor tranquility producing.

On the contrary, He is a prophet persecuted without mercy by the authorities, excommunicated from the Jewish community, betrayed by false friends, handed over to the Romans and crucified as a lesson for everyone.

**There is no doubt that Jesus wants peace and not war.** Only that his peace has nothing to do with how the world understands peace. This is a false peace, built on injustice, discrimination, marginalization. Facing this false peace, Jesus does want war.

Jesus does not come to the world to be a man without problems and commitments. Jesus comes to the world to give witness to the truth and to wage war against lies, to proclaim the Good News to the poor and to denounce the injustice of the powerful. Jesus comes to the world to say to some: “Blessed!” and to others: “Oh ye hypocrites!”

The Gospel of Jesus is conflicting: It brings division within the family and creates conflicts in our conscience. It obligates us to define ourselves, to take a position, to opt between two alternatives. The word of God is conflicting because it asks for our conversion, for the renunciation of our selfish plans, and to do battle for a better world.

To decide for Christ and to follow Him faithfully is not an easy matter. But his way also fills us with profound joy and true and secure peace. And at the end of the journey, the joy and the happiness of Christ forever awaits us.

## Questions for reflection

1. Do I buy what everyone buys?
2. Without thinking, do I repeat what is said on TV?
3. Do I keep silence when I see something that is bad?

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