

TITLE: Christian Crisis Management

DATE: for August 17, 2025

ID: 20th Sunday of the Year (C cycle)

SCRIPTURE: Luke 12:49-53

TEXT: A believer must account for Luke's radical impulses. Scholars call them the Great Reversal—"the hungry he has filled with good things; the rich has sent away empty" (1:53). From the beginning of his Gospel, Luke records these impulses: Read what Mary thinks (1:46-55); what Zechariah says (1:68-79); read Simeon's prophecy (2: 34-35). Take special note how Jesus introduces his ministry with a text from Isaiah (4: 18-19). Recall how Matthew spiritualizes the Lord's words (Matt 5:3—"poor in spirit"). Compare it to Luke's realism (Luke 6:20—"Blessed are you who are poor"). Luke believes that Christians live in crises.

I do not think Jesus was a social revolutionary, however. I think Jesus desired a revolution of the heart that may, in turn, change society. A revolution of the heart means that believers engage in a radical internal struggle through which the believer decides to give of oneself for others as Jesus gave of himself for us. He wants each of us to reform so that we might navigate even hard times with a peace-filled heart. He refers us to his "baptism," that is, his crucifixion. Even in the worst of times, believers need to live his self-giving love and love's extensions—forgiveness, mercy, compassion, charity, reconciliation, justice, and peace. The most moving examples occur in Luke's version of the passion: Read Luke 22: 42; Luke 22: 47-51; and Luke 23: 34).

We who are today's disciples need to ask why people oppose a revolution of the heart. Who is against peace? Who is opposed to justice? Why resist compassion? Who fears the power of love? More importantly, a believer needs to ask whether s/he has undergone a revolution of the heart.