

**The Reflection from Pastor Fr. John
Carlos, Holy Cross Church, Harrison, NJ,
August 1, 2021**

CULTURE WAR

Today our culture seems to be as opposed to Christianity as the people that confronted the Ephesians. Our society has gone from embracing faith in God to pushing religion out of the public square and seeking to put it under “house arrest.”

There are no longer commonly accepted codes of moral behavior based on God’s law: what is judged good depends on each individual or on the consensus found in the media.

Our society has moved from being uncomfortable with abortion to professing it to be a human right. Greed, ambition, lust, abuse, pornography, addiction, self-centeredness, and a failure to recognize the values of every person as a unique creation of God have numbed the conscience of many people.

This anti-Gospel culture has affected all persons, including Catholics. That influence became even more pronounced during the current pandemic. With churches closed, Catholics were not able to gather with their believers to be renewed and strengthened in their faith. They were like people who stopped going to the gym, their faith was weakened.

Spending more time at home also meant more time to spent streaming entertainment, surfing the internet, and being engrossed in social media. It meant more time being influenced by a largely non-Christian culture, often hostile to the Church.

To counteract this, we need, as Jesus tells us in this Sunday’s Gospel, to do “the work of God.” That work, he explains, is “to believe in the one he sent.”

Believing in Jesus is not primarily accepting certain doctrine, but rather trying to see life as he did. It means gathering with our fellow Catholics to share the breads of life and the truth of the Gospel. That requires an ongoing effort, especially in a society that is constantly pulling us in other directions, and pulling many of our fellow Catholics away from Sunday Mass.

Saint Paul reminds us that we have to “put on the new self, created in God’s way of righteousness.

With affectionate prayers,

Father John Carlos