

My Dear Sisters and Brothers.

Jesus said to his disciples: From now on a household of five will be divided, three against two, and two against three. There will be division between parents and children, and children and parents. These are harsh words. Harsh and hurtful. And we might have all sorts of disturbing ideas gathering in our minds about them. But instead of speculating about such things, let us see how these words of Jesus work out in real life.

In 1944 a horrible war was raging in our street: the shortest street between the mountains and the river Danube. The front line between the Germans and the Russians was in our street for over a month, slowly destroying everything. I was 16 years old at the time. My Mom's prayer, I remember it well, was that she does not mind if we lose everything, but please God, keep the family together. And so it happened. We lost everything, but against incredible odds the family stayed together.

A few years later, in 1947 on the 10th of January I was preparing for my final exam after eight years of high school. I was conditionally accepted into medical school depending on the outcome of this exam. It was early afternoon. And then it came to me, the first time in my life, that I shall become a priest. All this filled me with God's presence, and by the evening I knew that I shall carry out this call by entering the Society of Jesus. A month later, I told my family what I wanted to do. All hell broke loose. My Mom cried and said: Don't become a Jesuit, they will break your heart. She asked my brother to talk sense to me. He tried but was not successful. Then she wanted me to talk to my Dad. He asked me: Do you really want to do this? I said: Yes. Very much. And he said: That's good enough for me. As you see, my Brothers and Sisters: the household was divided two against two. I entered the Jesuit novitiate on the 15th of August, 1947.

I was ordained to the priesthood in England in 1961. I could not go back to Hungary to visit my parents because having escaped from there illegally I would have been arrested by the communist government immediately. My father died in the late fifties, but my Mom could come and be there at the ordination.



My dear Sisters and Brothers, just looking at this picture we can see that the love and mercy of our wonderful God, wipes away all tears. Amen.