



## *Reflection from Fr. Garry Richmeier*

Is it more important to be right or to be in relationship? This seems to be a question that is very much defining us as a society these days. More and more, people are seeing this an either-or choice, and are choosing being right at the expense of being in relationship. The problem is that all of us see ourselves as "right." Why would anyone hold an opinion or viewpoint which they believed to be wrong? So if I'm willing to sacrifice relationship in favor of asserting my "rightness," I may easily sever my relationship with anyone who thinks differently. We see that happening in our polarized society. The trouble is that the very existence of a society depends upon maintaining relationships among its members. Relationship must somehow take precedence over "being right" if we want to continue to exist as a viable society.

Jesus was able to balance relationship with speaking what he believed. He disagreed with some Scribes and Pharisees, but instead of writing them off or avoiding them, he continued to have discussions with them, even while they were planning to execute him. He didn't agree with the life-styles of the sinners he encountered. But instead of demonizing, marginalizing, or excommunicating them, he trusted that his relationship with them, his caring for them, would help them change their lives. Jesus was able to look beyond the differences and disagreements and see what was the same among everyone -- that each was a beloved child of God. That enabled him to place relationship above being right.

As Christians, our call is to love (which is relationship) rather than to convince others that we are right. Like Jesus, we have to see something deeper in others, not just their appearance, political party, opinions, or viewpoints. If we can do the challenging work of recognizing others as beloved children of God, and treat them as such, maybe our example can invite others to do the same. This could go a long way in healing some of the divisions in our society.

*Peace,  
Fr. Garry*