

Fighting Words Fourth Week of Easter Tuesday, April 24, 2018 8:15 AM Acts 11:19-26; **Jn 10:22-30** (St. Fidelis of Sigmaringen, priest and martyr) (Closedness to Jesus is actually a closedness to the Father; he is really saying you don't believe in God.)

Today we are speaking of Jesus in Jerusalem during Hanukkah, and **he attracted a very motley crowd**. There are many who follow him with **different degrees of interest and commitment**, different degrees of conviction and belief. But there were those who followed him with no real conviction and no real belief, although perhaps some interest or maybe even we could call it **curiosity**. The problem was with several of them or many of them, as is revealed in the gospels, **there was a level of antagonism**. You can feel it with this question: **“How long are you going to keep us in suspense?”** as if Jesus was just playing with them, as if there was something lacking in his forthrightness or there was something really and deeply ambiguous about his message, but none of this was true. **He was very forthright and very unambiguous**. Most of all, **his signs spoke**. And they spoke **of his mission, which was to do the will of the Father**. And **they revealed his unity with the Father**, the fact as he put it at the end: **“The Father and I are one.”**

Now all along one would think that **if there were people who really were open and well-disposed**, they would have gathered this. **They would not really be standing apart challenging him to be more clear**, to be more deliberate, and so on. His point is you are not among my sheep. Why? Because **to be among his sheep one has to have a certain sort of openness**, in fact one has to be **already begotten from above**. One has to have an openness to the Father to actually see Jesus for who he is. So a **closedness to Jesus is actually a closedness to the Father**, which is what this is all about. Not only is he saying you do not believe me, **he is really saying you don't believe in God**, which is a rather strong thing to say. Surely they believe in something, which they call God, but his point is that isn't the real God. And I'm afraid they understood very well what he was saying because Judaism was based on this idea there is only one God, true God, one authentic God, and there are many false ones. There are many false visions and false prophecies and idols and images that are utterly false. **So that makes these fighting words, and they were received that way.**