

Homily: In Your Will Is Our Peace

Readings: Philippians 2:1-4; Psalm 100; John 14:23-29

Wednesday, June 28th, 2023 IHM Chapter

At the Last Supper, Jesus promises his disciples:

"Peace, I leave to you" (Jn 14:27).

What does the peace that Jesus promises mean?

The peace Jesus announces is a saving peace.

"My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you."

Luke is so clear on this.

The sinful woman who washed Jesus' feet with her tears

can ***"go in peace"*** because her sins have been forgiven (Lk 7:50, 48).

With their greeting, ***"Peace to this house"*** (Lk 10:5),

the disciples offer salvation to the towns where Jesus will come.

What Luke narrates, Paul explains.

The heart of his message is a short proclamation: ***"He is our peace!"***

How?

Here is where Paul truly shines throughout his letters.

Christ is our peace because he ***"has broken down the wall of hostility"*** that divides us.

Christ is our peace because ***"through him, God was pleased to reconcile to Himself all things... making peace by the blood of his cross."***

Christ is our peace because **only through Him** do all of us ***"have access in one Spirit to the Father"*** (Eph 2:18).

Christ is our peace because it is by his gathering us ***"in a single body"*** that **his peace rules in our hearts** (Col 3:15).

This is the peace that is ***"the fruit of the Spirit"*** (Gal 5:22),
the peace that ***"surpasses all understanding"*** (Phil 4:7),
the peace that endures in distress and tribulation (Rom 5:1-5),
the peace that ***"will keep our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus."***

The biblical ***"God of peace"*** is **a God who saves;**

and **a heart at peace** is a heart that is one with God in Christ.

If such is the gospel of peace, God's own good news,
 what should the word "*peace*" say to us?
 What meaning, above all others, does "*peace*" have for you?
 It will vary, of course.

For a **soldier**, **peace** is the **absence of war**;
 for a **politician**, perhaps **a reformed Immigration Bill**;
 for a **mother**, a child asleep.

For **you**, here at Chapter, it's a period of calm and rest,
 like now, and at 5 pm
 when the business of day stops until the morning.

Now each of these is indeed a facet of peace.

But the **peace of Christ is deeper** than any of these.

It is a **peace the world cannot give**,
 it is **the presence of God** within you, all around you,
 a **communion** with the Trinity that draws you into the divine life,
 a **sharing in the life** of God's very own Son?

Bottom line - the peace of Christ ***is not*** a psychological state
 resulting from **God's life within you**.

Peace *is* your communion with God.

You have been reconciled to Him through Christ;
 you are one with Him in love.

But if ***this is*** basic **Christian peace**,

then the peace of Christ can coexist **with war** in the world,
 with **human agony**, with **death**, and the **myriad forms of human dying**.

This coexistence Christ predicted:

***"I have said this to you that in me you may find peace.
 In the world, you find suffering, but have courage:
 I have conquered the world"*** (J n 16:33).

According to John's gospel,

the "world" represents ***all that which*** is **hostile to God**,
 where **sin tyrannizes**, **hate smothers love**, **death destroys life**.

In ***that*** world, where we must live and die,

we will indeed find distress and tribulation.
 In *that* world, **we indeed need courage** to survive, to overcome;
 and **our courage** comes from the fact that Jesus Christ,
 who *is* our peace, has conquered the world,
 has broken its power - not by force
but by total surrender to love consummated in crucifixion.

But coexistence is not enough.

It will not do **to clutch the peace of Christ** like a security blanket
and endure the world's distress with a stiff upper lip.
Precisely because we have been reconciled to God in Christ,
precisely because the life of the risen Lord
 flows through us like another bloodstream, **we are sent,**
have been missioned to this world at war, this world in distress.
 If Christ conquered the world, so must we Christians.

Let me ask you:

What **wars** have you prevented in your community or your family?

What **mines** of envy or hate, of discord or dislike,
 have you defused in your convent or school?

Who hurts less because you love more?

Who hurts more because you love less?

Who was discouraged or lonely but has come alive at your touch?

Is anyone freer to laugh because you have swallowed your pride?

Who is hungry for food or affection and is fed by your faith?

Who thirsts for justice and feels more human because you are there?

Who experiences God's absence and finds the image of God on your face?

Sisters, this "**world**" of which John speaks

is ultimately smallness and sin,

and so, we are part *of the world* that has to be overcome.

We overcome it only as Jesus did:

by touching to it the peace Christ has left to you,

the communion with God that has made you a new creature.

The paradox is: by opening our heart to others
we will *experience* the peace of Christ that is *there*,
we will *feel* his real presence.

Otherwise, the peace of Christ can become just a cold theological truth.

Do you want to feel the peace of Christ,
do you want it to radiate out to others?

Then share it; give it away!