

Commentary to the Sixth Sunday of Easter -C-



“Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives peace do I give peace.” When we think of peace we usually consider the cessation of hostilities between warring nations, or even warring members of a family. That is not the peace the Lord gives. The peace of the Lord is the joy we experience when we are united to Him.

This is the peace that Jesus felt on the cross when He was united to His Father while His Sacred Body was being tortured to death. This is the peace that the martyrs felt when others brutalized them for refusing to give up Jesus Christ. This is the peace that we all feel when we are mocked for taking our faith, our commitment to the Lord, so seriously that we refuse to join in with the immorality of our particular societies, be that at school, in the neighborhood, or even within the country.

Sometimes I wonder how the mothers and fathers of our parish can remain so calm in the middle of little children pulling on them, and older children needing guidance, along with the stresses of work, caring for the home, etc. How do you do it all, and do it so calmly? Well, calmly at least most of the time. Then I realize: You pray. You are united to Christ. You have to some degree or other, the peace of Christ. It gets you through. He gets you through.

Sometimes I wonder how our young people do it, particularly our young college, high school and even middle school students. You have your courses you need to complete, teams to play on, activities to support, and talents to perfect. And then there is the pressure of relationships, the biggest pressure you have. There is the pressure of having friends without getting involved with substance abuse. There is the pressure of having a girlfriend or boyfriend without crossing the line into immoral behavior. There is the pressure of being mocked because you don't go along with what some say, incorrectly, that everyone is doing. But you remain committed to Jesus Christ. You go about your lives calmly, and with peace. Your union with Christ gives you the peace you need to do all things well, happily and with the joy of the Lord.

There is a wonderful mystery of our lives that the immoral world will never understand: Saying "Yes" to Christ does not make every day a Good Friday. Saying "Yes" to Christ makes every day an Easter Sunday.

Our friends, our neighbors, the members of our families, come to us with their problems, their needs, their fears. Why? Because they want us to share our peace with them. They want us to share with them the Peace of Christ. We would like to solve other people's problems. We would like to make their pain go away. But, very often, we cannot do either. We can do something far greater, though. We can encourage them to be united to the Lord and trust in Him. We can offer them the peace that has been given to us, the Peace of the Lord.

And this why Christ came: to replace chaos with calm, hatred with love, and turmoil with peace. Union with Jesus puts all the difficulties of the world, including our personal worlds, into perspective. The great Jamie Kelleher, a fifteen year old in the last stages of leukemia, said to me back in those days just before my ordination, "I have lost everything. My friends are too far away to visit. I have lost my privacy. People just walk into my room without even knocking. I can't do school work. I am too weak to move. I have lost everything. But no one can take Jesus from me." Jamie had the peace of Christ.

May the Peace of Christ be with you all, always.

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