

SPIRITUALITY

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

John 14:23

R⁷. Alleluia, alleluia.

Whoever loves me will keep my word, says the Lord,
and my Father will love him and we will come to him.

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Gospel

John 14:23-29; L57C

Jesus said to his disciples:

“Whoever loves me will keep my word,
and my Father will love him,
and we will come to him and
make our dwelling with him.

Whoever does not love me does not
keep my words;
yet the word you hear is not mine
but that of the Father who sent
me.

“I have told you this while I am with
you.

The Advocate, the Holy Spirit,
whom the Father will send in my
name,
will teach you everything
and remind you of all that I told you.
Peace I leave with you; my peace I give
to you.

Not as the world gives do I give it to
you.

Do not let your hearts be troubled or
afraid.

You heard me tell you,
‘I am going away and I will come
back to you.’

If you loved me,
you would rejoice that I am going to
the Father;
for the Father is greater than I.
And now I have told you this before it
happens,
so that when it happens you may
believe.”

Reflecting on the Gospel

Our reading today continues to be from the Gospel of John, and interestingly it's from Jesus' Last Supper discourse. So even though we are in the Easter season, we harken back to the Last Supper for words of wisdom from Jesus. And these words are appropriate as we approach the conclusion of the Easter season at Pentecost, the feast of the giving of the Holy Spirit, which we will celebrate in two weeks. But here Jesus tells the disciples forthrightly that the Father will send the Holy Spirit, the Advocate, in Jesus' name. The role of the Spirit is to teach the disciples, and to remind them of what Jesus said. The Spirit then is a

gift of the Father. This gift was given not only to that generation of Christians but to us too. We have that same Advocate to teach us and the other followers of Jesus. But that is not the only gift we receive.

A gift of Jesus given to the disciples is peace, but Jesus is quick to say that it's not the peace given by the world, but that given by Jesus. The world's peace can be understood as the absence of war, or a cessation of hostilities. Others interpret it as the peace gained by domination of subject peoples. And in Jesus' time and place we recall that the Romans were the occupying power. A generation after Jesus the city of Jerusalem with its temple would be destroyed by Rome. At the conclusion of that

campaign the Romans would say they pacified Judea! The death, destruction, slaughter, fire, and pillaging of Jerusalem and its temple meant for the Romans that the land was at peace! So, no, Jesus' peace is not like that given by the world, given by the Romans.

The peace Jesus gives is an interior wholeness, to be at peace with oneself and the world around us. The inner disposition of a disciple is one of peace, not aggression; peace, rather than anger; peace, not hostility; peace, rather than anxiety; peace, not pursuit of ill-gotten gain. The life of a disciple is marked by the gift of peace given by Jesus.

Living the Paschal Mystery

How many of us live lives of peace? And by peace do we mean absence of strife? Or the peace that Christ gives? The peace that Christ gives is not only for those disciples in the New Testament, it is for us. The relationship we have with Christ means that we do not look to outside forces or external sources for validation. Our worth and sense of self is not measured by a job, position, house, children, family, retirement plan, or the praise of others. Instead, our peace and well-being come from Christ himself. That peace and security can never be taken away. We are no longer subject to the whims of others, the hazards of the world, or the vagaries of passing fancies. Regardless of our condition in life, we have something fundamental at our core that is a gift. Let us rest in the knowledge that we have been given the gift of peace that comes from Christ himself.



Focusing the Gospel

Key words and phrases: Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you.

To the point: Just as we read on the Second Sunday of Easter, Jesus again offers the disciples peace. The gospel we hear today is actually taken from earlier in the Gospel of John, during the Last Supper discourse. These closest friends of Jesus are about to be shaken completely in faith. They will see the man they have come to know as the Lord die on a cross. But before these calamities take place Jesus gives them one final gift, peace, and not just a general feeling of peace, but the very peace of Christ. When he sees them for the first time after the resurrection in the Upper Room where they are huddled due to fear, Jesus offers this gift again, "Peace be with you." Jesus had told his friends, "Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid." This is a difficult lesson to learn, but Jesus never tires of offering his peace to us.

Connecting the Gospel

to the first reading: In the Acts of the Apostles the early church continues to ponder and discern the process for Gentiles to join the new Christian faith. Paul and Barnabas go to Jerusalem to discuss with the apostles if circumcision should be required for Gentile Christians. Led by Peter and James, the council comes to a decision that circumcision will not be required and writes a letter to the Gentile churches. In it they express concern that these matters have disturbed the Gentiles' peace of mind and clarify that they do not want to place any undue burden upon them.

to experience: When our rules for worship or faith place burdens upon others we are called to step back and discern if this is truly the will of Jesus, the Prince of Peace.

Connecting the Responsorial Psalm

to the readings: In Psalm 67 we hear the cry, "May the peoples praise you, O God; / may all the peoples praise you!" And in the first and second reading we see this exclamation coming true. In the Acts of the Apostles, Gentiles receive the good news of Jesus' death and resurrection and are brought into the early church along with their Jewish brothers and sisters. In the second reading from Revelation we are given a vision of the holy city, Jerusalem, becoming a beacon for the world that all nations may "walk by its light" (21:24). Our faith has never been a treasure to hoard and stow away. It is to be shared with all nations and peoples.

to psalmist preparation: This psalm begins, "May God have pity on us and bless us; / may he let his face shine upon us." After asking for blessing from the Lord it also expresses the desire that all the peoples of the world might bless the Lord in return. How do you experience blessing in your life? What or who blesses you? What or whom do you bless?

PROMPTS FOR FAITH-SHARING

In the Acts of the Apostles we see the Jewish leaders of the early church reaching out to the Gentile members of the community. Within your own church community are there groups that seem at odds with each other? How might they be invited to reach out to one another in peace?

In the reading from Revelation we hear of a city that needs no sun or moon for it is lit by the glory of the Lord. What are the places in your life that need to be touched by the Lord's light?

How do you experience the peace of Christ in your daily life?

Jesus tells us, "Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid." What troubles your heart at this moment? How might you entrust this fear to God?