

IF YOU WANT PEACE, WORK FOR JUSTICE



“If you want peace, work for justice.” *Pope Paul VI, For the Celebration of the Day of Peace, 1972*

Let us walk through today’s readings chronologically:

“On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’”

With those words, can we imagine the gift given to the apostles?

Peace! Scared, they were not at peace. When harboring anger at another (which usually means that I am hurt) I am not at peace. The inner peace that Jesus gifted us allows us to forbear and forgive one another.

During the Rite of Peace can you sincerely offer the sign of peace to someone who bugs you? Can you cross the aisle to share the sign of peace? Can you imagine crossing the aisles of society to offer peace?

“When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together. And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were. Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim.”

We are sustained by the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1830). Like the disciples did not select which language to speak, which gift we are blessed with is not ours to choose. Understanding this may help us tolerate each other’s differences.

“There are **different kinds of spiritual gifts** but the same Spirit; there are **different forms of service** but the same Lord; there are **different workings** but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit.

“As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit.”

We are all brothers and sisters in God’s one human family. Just as I may not like my nose (I don’t!), I need my nose to smell, taste, and prop up my glasses. I need each brother and sister; I wish each peace.

“We the People.” So begins the U.S. Constitution. That it does not begin with “Each of Us” underscores that we are in this together and together we are one. Sisters and brothers of all faiths, colors and nationalities are in this together and we are one.

Sisters and brothers of all spiritual gifts, offering different forms of service, working differently are in this together and we are one. We are one body. I wish each one peace.

Read more of the opening sentence of our Constitution: “We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility ... establish this Constitution for the United States of America.” That is, if you want peace (tranquility) and justice, then establish a Constitution.

Life is not that simple. Christians have the Beatitudes and that alone hasn’t ensured peace. Therefore, in the words of Pope Paul VI, if we want peace, work for justice for all members of Christ’s family. (Sunday Readings for May 24, 2015)



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