

Above all, it seems, Christ desires to give us His peace. When He was an infant and couldn't yet speak, He sent angels to proclaim, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to those on whom His favor rests.”¹ During His last night with His disciples before His crucifixion, he said, “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.”² After He had risen from the dead, He found His disciples hiding out of fear in the Upper Room. “Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’”³

I hope it is not lost on you that Christ offers His peace to us through the same words at every Mass. We proclaim His peace during the Gloria. After the consecration the priest, whose heart is conformed to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, makes present His words, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.”⁴ Christ is present in the Host when these words are spoken; it is only in His presence that we can experience true peace. The sign of peace takes place with Him in our midst. Once we have received peace from Him, we can offer it to one another. This is true in the liturgy because it is true in our lives; we cannot bring peace to the world if we have not first received the peace of Christ.

“The first way to work for peace in the world is to let Jesus establish is in our own souls.”⁵ I am reminded of a story of St. Teresa of Calcutta that demonstrates this point quite nicely. In June of 1982, the Israeli Army laid siege to West Beirut, bombing the city, closing the airport, and cutting off the food, water, and power supplies. By August, over 500 civilians had died, and many more were wounded. The staff at an orphanage in the city abandoned the children, most of whom were mentally disabled, in order to save their own lives. St. Teresa heard about these children and felt that she must rescue them one by one. She was told that it was impossible; the bombings made it impossible to be outside without risk of injury, and traveling was out of the question. She simply smiled and said, “I asked Our Lady in prayer. I asked for a ceasefire tomorrow for the eve of her feast day” (the eve of the Assumption). Sure enough, the next day a peace fell over Beirut, and she, along with others, were able to go rescue the orphans. St. Teresa was only able to bring about this worldly peace because the peace of Christ reigned in her heart; she was certain that Our Lady would hear her prayer and grant her request. She didn't worry about what others said was impossible. She trusted in the power of prayer. From her inner peace, she was able to bring peace to the abandoned orphans and the city of Beirut as a whole.

You might read the story above and think, “I could never bring about peace in the world like that.” I would respond, “Is anything too marvelous for the Lord to do?”⁶ St. Teresa didn't set out to cause a ceasefire; this was simply the fruit of her prayer and her love for the abandoned orphans. She could not have done this without a deep trust in Jesus and Our Lady, a total confidence that they would hear her prayer, and a complete abandonment to the will of God. This week, I encourage you to receive the inner peace of Jesus, no matter where you are. His peace is real. On this Solemnity, trust that Christ is the King of Peace. If you do not know how to trust, ask Him to show you. For as I said at the beginning of this article, above all, it seems, Christ desires to give us His peace.

In Christ, Aurelia Vaiana

¹ Luke 2:14

² John 14:27

³ John 20:19

⁴ John 14:27

⁵ Fr. Jean C. D'Elbée, *I Believe in Love* p. 140

⁶ Genesis 18:14