

“CHANGING MINDS....CHANGING HEARTS”

Easter to Pentecost, 2019

Small Group Gathering for Week No 5

Gospel: 6th Sunday of Easter; John 14: 23-29

Gather:

A candle is lit to signal the start of our gathering. The moving light of the candle is a sign of the living Christ with us.

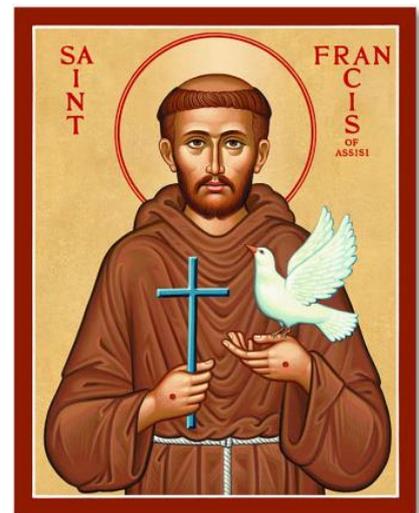
A short time of silence.

Let us Pray:

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.*

*O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
Amen.*

(Attributed to St Francis of Assisi, (Italian religious, 1182-1226), but unknown until 1912 when it was published in a French magazine)



My Present Life:

Think of your life at present. Spend at least five minutes in silence thinking about the following questions.

Do you have a sense of being at peace deep within you?

If it hasn't always been there, what brought it to you?

If it isn't there, is there something that needs to be addressed to help you find peace?

A Faith Angle:

Last Sunday, the Church throughout the world encountered Christ in the following part of the Gospel. Listen to it and/or read it through in silence. Spend some time in prayerful, silent engagement with the text.



John 14:23-29

²³ Jesus said to His disciples, “Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. ²⁴ Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; and the word that you hear is not mine but is from the Father who sent me.

²⁵ “I have said these things to you while I am still with you. ²⁶ But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. ²⁷ Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. ²⁸ You heard me say to you, ‘I am going away, and I am coming to you.’ If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I. ²⁹ And now I have told you this before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe.

(Bible Gateway, New Revised Standard Catholic Edition, <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+14%3A23-29&version=NRSVCE> Retrieved 12.03.19)

Some Other Thoughts:

Love continues as the theme of this part of Jesus’ Last Supper discourse. It occurs shortly after the passage we read last week. Here the love Jesus is talking about is the love his followers are to have for him. Of course, those followers may have lived in the first century or be living in the twenty-first century.

The whole of John Ch 14 is an expression of reassurance from Jesus to his followers. In the first verse, Jesus tells his followers, “Do not let your hearts be troubled and concludes (v 29-31) with Jesus seeking to share with his followers his calmness in the face of what is about to happen.

In our extract we learn that the Father will not leave Jesus’ followers without a guide, an advocate. This Advocate (translation of the Greek word “Paraclete”) will provide a continuing presence of Jesus with his people.

Jesus then names a great gift he is leaving with his followers; peace, his kind of peace. His going to the Father will lead to Jesus’ peace finding a place in the hearts of his followers.

Point of interest? The sign of peace at Mass is not put there to allow people to reconcile with each other. Ideally, that's supposed to happen before one brings "your gift to the altar" (Matt 5: 23-24). The action at Mass is about our sharing in the peace Christ promised at the Last Supper. Christ is now present with us; we share in the peace he brings.

Sharing:

If you wish, only if you wish, share one or two (no more than two) of your thoughts or insights about the passage. Please speak for no more than twenty seconds at a time. This sharing is not a time for comparing the values of people's comments and it is not a time for debate.

Go back to the gospel reading for another period of silent engagement.

My Future Life:

Turning to the future, and in the light of your prayer reflection and discussion, spend at least five minutes considering the following questions.

Is there something you need to do, with God's help, to bring a greater sense of peace into your life? When will you start doing this?

"Peace and quiet" go together. How might you build a time for reflective silence into each day (ideally) or, at least, into each week?

Go:

This has been a special time. It will have been worthwhile if it leads us to live, even in a little way, as better people. We ask God's blessing on us and those everyday lives of ours as we return to them.

We pray for each other.

(This blessing, is found in *Shorter Book of Blessings* is from the Old Testament's Book of Numbers and is the first reading at Mass on 1 January each year, the World Day of Peace, as well as the Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God. In a way, then, these are God's first words to his people each calendar year.)

May the Lord bless you and keep you.

May he let his face shine upon you and show you his mercy.

May he turn his countenance towards you and give you his peace.

Amen

