

'Blessed Are the Peacemakers'

Following are excerpts from Pope John Paul II's address given at the Mass for Peace in Quezon Circle, Manila.

We are celebrating the peace that Christ won for us by his Paschal Mystery — by his passion, death and resurrection from the dead. We are able to enjoy peace because God sent his own Son into the world to be our redeemer.



And the peace that we are celebrating is our redemption from sin, our deliverance from God's anger and from eternal punishment. Without Christ we would have remained, in the words of Saint Paul, "the children of wrath." But in truth we have been liberated by Christ; everything is new in our relationship with God. Christ has reconciled us to himself, "making peace by the blood of his cross." We have been called out of the darkness of sin into the Kingdom of God's marvelous light, where we have received mercy and grace and peace from Jesus Christ.

Through God's love we have not only received the gift of human life, we have also become adopted children of God. Through Christ's great peacemaking act — his sacrifice on the cross — we have become his brothers and sisters, and, with him, the heirs of eternal life. Because of this new relationship of ours with God in Christ, peace is now possible: peace in our hearts and in our homes, peace in our communities and in our nations, peace throughout the world.

Yes, Jesus Christ is the supreme peacemaker of human history, the reconciler of human hearts, the liberator of humanity, the redeemer of man. "He is our peace."

It is God the Father's plan that the peace which his beloved Son, Jesus Christ, won for us on Calvary should be communicated to every human being, individually and as a member of society. This communication of Christ's peace takes place in the Church through the action of the Holy Spirit working through God's word and the sacraments.

By faith and baptism we take on a relationship with God that makes peace truly possible. We become in fact the children of God and are incorporated into the Body of Christ. We are baptized into Christ's death — his great peacemaking act — so that we may share in his resurrection and walk in the newness of life.

Through the Sacrament of Penance Jesus offers us pardon and peace. Precisely because of its importance as the Sacrament of Reconciliation, I stressed in my first encyclical, "man's right to a more personal encounter with the crucified forgiving Christ," and urged the faithful observance of the centuries-old practice of individual confession. Today I present once again the Sacrament of Penance as a gift of Christ's peace and

love, and I ask you all to make every opportunity to profit from this opportunity of grace.

And the Eucharist, my dear friends, is the culmination of our sacramental peace, in which we represent to the Father the sacrifice of his Son, and receive in return the gift of reconciliation and peace — the gift of Jesus himself. Jesus, the Prince of Peace, communicated himself and becomes our peace.

It is indeed important for us to understand how God puts us into contact with Christ and communicates to us the peace of Christ. It is vitally important for parents to transmit to their children an understanding of the faith, and a deep appreciation of sacramental life, so that each generation may be aware of Christ's peace. The success of the Church's mission in this regard depends on you; it is intimately linked with the family's irreplaceable catechetical activity.

At the same time Christ invites us and bids us bring his peace to the world. This is the way he wants us to live; he has spelled it out for us in the Gospel Beatitudes: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God." We are called to pass on the healing that we have experienced and the reconciliation that we have given so lavishly. And we are told what we must do: "Clothe yourselves with heartfelt mercy, with kindness, humility, meekness and patience. Bear with one another . . . Forgive as the Lord has forgiven you." Having been forgiven, we are called to forgive. Having been justified by God's grace, we are called to give witness to justice in our lives, for we know full well that peaceful relationships can exist in the world only when the justice of Christ permeates hearts and is expressed in all the structures of society.

But in order to communicate peace in accordance with Christ's words, we must live that peace. In the words of the Apostle Paul, "Christ's peace must reign in your hearts, since as members of the one body, you are called to that peace."

Yes, dear brothers and sisters, there must be peace in our families, between husbands and wives, between parents and children; peace in our communities, peace in our parishes and local churches; peace in society and over the earth; peace in the hearts of the ministers of Christ, in the hearts of the religious and laity, in the hearts of all those who embrace his Gospel of love.

Only then can our proclamation and communication of peace be effective: peace to the poor and to the rich, peace to the young and to the old, peace to the sick and the suffering, to prisoners and all who mourn. Peace to those who are crushed by the burden of sin, and to those who stumble beneath the weight of their cross. Peace to all who serve with us in the name of Christ and for the glory of his Father. Peace to all our brothers and sisters in Christ, to all our fellow human beings: the peace of reconciliation, of justice, of freedom from fear, of liberation from oppression and sin, of deliverance from eternal death. The peace of Christ's kingdom, the peace of hope, the peace of Jesus himself. Dearly beloved, this is indeed the peace that I proclaim to you today — to those far and near: the peace of God's kingdom, the peace of Christ.

Fr. Paul J. Cuddy



On the Right Side

The Priest Was Cross

Mrs. M: My son has stopped going to Mass because of the way a priest treated him.

Father X: Oh? What was that all about?

Mrs. M: He had a new baby, a beautiful eight-pound baby, Father. They call him Kevin, lovely blue eyes and fat cheeks. Darling. Looks like my son when he was a baby. You should meet my Jimmie, Father. He was such a good Catholic. Well, when he went to the rectory to see about baptism for Kevin, the priest blasted him.

Father X: Why would he ever do that?

Mrs. M: No reason at all. Just because he wasn't registered in the parish. He's only lived there two years, and sometimes they go to one parish, sometimes another. The priest said any good Catholic would be registered, have envelopes and be involved in the Church. Maybe Jimmie doesn't go to Mass all the time. You know how young people are these days. But he's a good Catholic.

Father X: I wonder why Jimmie didn't register in his parish. Every Catholic is supposed to be registered in some parish.

Mrs. M: Oh, he doesn't

believe in regimentation. Ever since he went to college he is strong for freedom. I worry that he might be too permissive about little Kevin. He's eight-months old now, and should be baptized.

Father X: Well, I suppose Jimmie does pay taxes and uses the public services like the roads and snow removal and police protection. He's hardly free not to pay his taxes. And I hope he registers in his district to vote. And I hope he lives at home with his wife. Why does he think he needn't belong to a parish? Doesn't it seem strange to expect the services of a parish and priest for marriages and baptisms and other specials, and yet not assume any ordinary responsibility for their own parish? And isn't it a little strange that he is careless about Mass even after the good training you gave him at home?

Mrs. M: But the priest was rude. He told my son he ought to be ashamed of himself. I thought the Church taught priests to be loving and concerned.

Father X: Some priests have a spiritual grace to persuade people to do good. Not all of us do have that. I wonder if this priest wasn't troubled because he was concerned about little Kevin's future. Father John Guy used to say: "People often think a priest is angry when he is really worried."

Mrs. M: Well, Father, what should I do?

Father X: Mrs. M, your son is an intelligent man whose feelings have been hurt, but whose mind is functioning. Give him a chance to cool off. He undoubtedly has the Faith, but has become lax. Do you remember the seven deadly sins? Pride, covetousness, lust, anger, gluttony, envy and sloth. Sloth is a kind of spiritual dullness, apathy, and is the most insidious of all. Let Jimmie cool off, and pray to Our Blessed Mother that he and his wife get organized and register like any normal practicing Catholics. Maybe Kevin will become a priest some day — just because an anxious priest was cross.

FEAST DAY

The diocesan Sisters of St. Joseph will celebrate the feast day of St. Joseph on March 21. The program includes an assembly in the Otto Shults

Center at Nazareth College, a procession to the Motherhouse, a Mass celebrated by Bishop Matthew H. Clark and a reception.

Mercedarian Religious Vocation Retreat

For men 18-35 considering a life of service in the Priesthood/Brotherhood. April 3, 4, 5, 1981. Cost: \$15

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