

Lent Week 4: Peace

In this week's Lenten reflection, we are looking at 'peace' as one of the fruits of the Spirit. Given the current state of the world, aspiring to peace may feel like a difficult or even impossible task. As Jeremiah cried out to the Israelites millennia ago, 'you say 'Peace, peace!' but there is no peace', challenging the injustices they were perpetrating and about which they were in denial.

But it is helpful to remember that peace is a fruit of the Spirit, the result of God at work within us. When we look to the gospels, and to the very Prince of Peace, we see that 'peace' is the state of being out of which Jesus acts, as opposed to a description of the context around him.

Peace is not the absence of war, nor of difficulty, but our inner equilibrium that comes from knowing God. In the stilling of the storm in Matthew 8 (:23-27), Mark 4 (:35-41), and Luke 8 (:22-25), we see that Jesus sleeps soundly in the boat as the waves begin to rage and the rains start to beat down. Awakened by the panicked disciples, he is neither shocked nor agitated by all the commotion going on around him. He calmly and authoritatively orders the storm to cease, and peace is restored.

In this, we see the reassurance of Christ's sovereignty over all creation. As we open our minds to receive this good news, may we be reassured that by the Spirit who is comforter, advocate and God's promise of his presence with us to the end of all ages. May we also allow the Spirit to move within us, that we might develop this gifting and be blessed with this precious charism.

During Lent, as we walk once more towards the cross, around us there may be discord, upset, broken relationships, hardship, storms, metaphorical and real. Our world too continues to wage war and suffer from climate change. May we open our hearts to the gift of the Spirit of peace, which places our ultimate security in Christ, and be the blessed peacemakers, our world so desperately needs.

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