

# ENCOURAGEMENT

February 2026 – Issue 175

## Peace

We all want peace or do we? We often speak glibly about peace which can mean many different things to people, The word itself conveys so much. At Christmas it can mean joy and happiness, in a place of conflict, an absence of trouble. For one in mental turmoil, it represents a feeling that things of the mind that the trouble can cease. To many it is an absence of war, persecution, and endless battles for survival. For those grieving it is an inner silence, free from pain... it may also mean a little respite from the daily up and downs of life. To one on the breadline, it may mean a day free of worry about food on the table. We all have a personal desire for peace and think of it differently.

In these days of so much which disturbs peace it is good to reflect on why it is so important and especially as we approach Lent. Ash Wednesday comes quickly on the 18<sup>th</sup> February.

Many people rightly pray for peace in the world. Do we really reflect on what we are praying for and do we reflect on what that peace really means for a Christians?

In the Gospel of John chapters 16 and 17, we have much to ponder on the meaning of peace as the Lord himself explains. This is one of the most beautiful ways to spend Lent just reflection on these chapters and it gives us much to reflect upon in terms of the significance of peace. In the discourse Jesus says:

*And again, “I have said this to you, so that in Me you may have PEACE. In the world you face persecution. But take courage; I have conquered the world!” ~ (John 16:33)*

This is just before the start of His Passion and therefore especially important. He did not say an

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absence of trouble or this or that, but nevertheless *peace*. *Have you ever thought what he meant therefore by ‘peace’?*

Then again, significantly, he enters into the upper room after the Resurrection and says:

*‘Peace be with you, as the Father sent me so I am sending you’*

Earlier in his farewell discourse He said, ‘*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.*’

Jesus did not shy away from either the Cross or pain and suffering, but he gave an assurance of His peace.



Photo by Scott Bursh

His peace therefore must have another dimension. It is not merely an absence of something but a profound way of being that has its source in the ‘Giver’ of the peace and the trust that He will provide it. The Holy Spirit is a source of that peace for He equips us with the gifts and that makes it possible.

If we look at holy men and women throughout the ages regardless of their circumstances they carry within themselves that interior peace and that space is full of the presence of the Lord himself.... it is important to realise that this interior peace is both a gift but also an assurance of His abiding presence. It is also statement that all our worries and concerns can be put at His feet and heart and that the present and future is His and he knows what He is about.

Is peace therefore something that we must have at all costs without regard for others? Certainly not, as Jesus himself states in the Beatitudes. We are called to be peace makers.... ‘Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the Children of God’.

*“Keep your soul at peace, in order to be able to be attentive and very faithful to the inner movement of the Holy Spirit.”*

St Peter Julian Eymard

We have been commissioned to be makers of peace. If we understand where this peace comes from then our task becomes to be at peace with each other and bear witness to God's presence and truly His children. Some of the greatest achievements towards harmony and peace have been through prayerful and non-violent means by those who exemplify being children of God.

Children have a right to that peace, and it is a sign of, or intent to be peace makers when we support the right and well-being of Children. They are the most vulnerable members of any society and when their peace is disturbed the consequences carry through, sometimes for generations. [More than one in six children globally](#) now live in areas affected by conflict, forced to face unthinkable violations as the world experiences the highest number of conflicts since World War II.

There are many organisations championing the peaceful existence of children. Do we stand by even with horror at the awful things that happen without wondering what we can do about it? It is easy to be shocked when schools, hospitals, water and electricity supplies are denied. When food is removed and torture and abuse happen, but do we consider that if we do nothing, we are in part responsible for a lack of action? There are always means of support by supporting groups working against these things either financially or practically, but do we ever protest by peaceful means or by writing letters, sign protests, or speak out?



School ruined but boys play  
Kharkiv Ukraine

The deeper the peace we feel as God's Children the more we become aware of the absence of peace for others. Peace is a gift of a heart, mind, soul and body at rest.

If we wish to become Children of God, then we must take peace seriously for ourselves and for others. Maybe this Lent is a time to start and become peacemakers.

Halina Holman ©

#### POPE LEO XIV

"The peace of the risen Jesus is unarmed, His was an unarmed struggle in the midst of concrete historical, political and social circumstances."

"When peace is not a reality that is lived, cultivated and protected, then aggression spreads into domestic and public life."

Religions, have a responsibility to avoid using faith to justify violence or war and instead to be "houses of peace," where hostility is addressed through dialogue, justice and forgiveness.

"Peace exists; it wants to dwell within us. The task is not to create it, but to welcome it, and to allow it to disarm us."

Rome 18<sup>TH</sup>. Jan. 26

"Afar beyond the stars,  
Where stands a winged sentry  
All skillful in the wars;  
There, above noise and danger  
Sweet Peace sits, crown'd with smiles,  
And One born in a manger  
Commands the beauteous files.  
He is thy gracious friend  
And (O my Soul awake!)  
Did in pure love descend,  
To die here for thy sake.  
If thou canst get but thither,  
There grows the flow'r of peace,  
The rose that cannot wither,  
Thy fortress, and thy ease.  
Leave then thy foolish ranges,  
For none can thee secure,  
But One, who never changes,  
Thy God, thy life, thy cure." *By Henry Vaughan (2<sup>nd</sup> Verse)*

#### Feast Days in February

1<sup>st</sup> Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

2<sup>nd</sup> The Presentation of the Lord

3<sup>rd</sup> St. Blaise      5<sup>th</sup> St. Agatha

6<sup>th</sup> St. Paul Miki & Companions

8<sup>th</sup> Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

10<sup>th</sup> St. Scholastica

11<sup>th</sup> Our Lady of Lourdes

14<sup>th</sup> Saints Cyril & Methodius

15<sup>th</sup> Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

17<sup>th</sup> Seven Founders of the Servite Order

18<sup>th</sup> Ash Wednesday

21<sup>st</sup> St. Peter Damian

22<sup>nd</sup> First Sunday of Lent

23<sup>rd</sup> St. Polycarp   27<sup>th</sup> St. Gregory of Narek