

## “Peace Be With You”

Pentecost 2009

John 20:19-23

I am not sure about you, but, as I read this,  
I perceive an amazing sense of urgency.

This is Jesus' *first* appearance to the Disciples after His resurrection.  
Mary Magdalene has informed them that she has seen them.  
We are not told their reaction. In Mark's gospel, they do not believe her.  
Regardless, they are locked in a room, “for fear of the Jews”.  
I cannot help but think they are fearful of Jesus too.  
They had totally “bailed” on Him, and now He is back!  
I would have been shaking in my sandals, terrified!  
He is coming to give them a huge piece of His mind: *paybacks!*

What occurs, however, is truly surprising.  
Jesus does not proceed as one might expect.  
Again, I would have expected some sort of scolding.  
Jesus, however, knows their poverty, Jesus knows they are lost.  
They indeed betrayed Him, which is grave, but they have nothing.  
They had given everything to follow Jesus, and He was killed.  
In their errancy, Jesus meets them, Jesus *finds* them.  
“Peace be with you” Jesus states twice.  
Peace is the fruit of right order.  
Whenever things are in place, there is peace.  
In coming to them, they come home to Him.  
Jesus truly *finds* the Disciples.  
“Peace be with you.”

Jesus also knows that there is no time to waste,  
that looking back will not really further His mission.  
Revisiting the past has some place, but it is past, and Christ is in the present.  
Jesus makes no mention of the past failings of the Disciples.  
His very presence sufficed to shed light,  
and His concern is with being in relationship with them  
and empowering them.  
When we love, we are in a healthy hurry.  
And so this encounter unfolds quickly.

- Jesus walks through the wall to enter the room.
- Without introduction, He gives them peace.
- Without a word, He shows the scars in His hands and His side.
- Without introduction again, He gives them peace.
- Without explanation or further preparation, he sends them on mission, a mission which is not a mini replicate of His own, but *His own*, “As the Father has sent me, so I send you.”  
Amazing: talk about not dwelling on the past!
- Without delay, He empowers them:  
“He breathed on them: ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’”
- Without compromise, he entrusts a daunting ministry, the ministry of Reconciliation.

Jesus comes to us, walking through the walls of our fear,  
and He breathes upon us the Holy Spirit,  
the One who brings us peace.

We are each indwelt by the Holy Spirit?

Fire and gifts within....

Do we know it?

Do we believe it?

There was a renowned Belgian Archbishop, Desire-Joseph Mercier, Archbishop of Brussels from 1906 until his death in 1926, known for his joy and his heroism during World War I. He was asked about holiness and happiness. He responded:

**I am going to reveal to you the secret of sanctity and happiness.  
Every day for five minutes surrender your imagination  
and close your eyes to the things of sense  
and your ears to the noises of the world, in order to enter into yourself.  
Then, in the sanctuary of your baptized soul  
(which is the temple of the Holy Spirit), speak to that Divine Spirit,  
saying to Him:**

*O Holy Spirit, beloved of my soul, I adore You. Enlighten me, guide me, strengthen me, console me. Tell me what I should do. Give me your orders. I promise to submit myself to all that You desire of me and accept all that You permit to happen to me. Let me only know Your Will.*

**If you do this, your life will flow happily, serenely,  
and full of consolation, even in the midst of trials.  
Grace will be proportioned to the trial, giving you strength to carry it,  
until you arrive at the Gate of Paradise.  
This submission to the Holy Spirit  
is the secret of sanctity and happiness.**

The Happiness of God is ours for the humble taking....