

Daily Reading & Meditation

Sunday (May 26): "My peace I give to you"

Scripture: *John 14:23-29*

23 Jesus answered him, "If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. 24 He who does not love me does not keep my words; and the word which you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me. 25 "These things I have spoken to you, while I am still with you. 26 But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. 27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. 28 You heard me say to you, 'I go away, and I will come to you.' If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I go to the Father; for the Father is greater than I. 29 And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place, you may believe.

Meditation: Do you know the love that surpasses all, that is stronger than death itself (Song of Songs 8:6)? In Jesus' last supper discourse he speaks of the love he has for his disciples and of his Father's love. He prepares his disciples for his imminent departure to return to his Father by exhorting them to prove their love for him through their loyalty and obedience to his word. He promises them the abiding instruction and consolation of the Holy Spirit.

God unites us to himself in a bond of love and peace

Saint Augustine says *the Lord loves each of us as if there were only one of us to love*. God's love for each of us is as real and tangible as the love of a mother for her child and the love of a lover who gives all for his beloved. God made us in love for love - to know him personally and to grow in the knowledge of his great love for us and to love him in return.

How can we know and be assured of the love of God? The Holy Spirit helps us to grow in the knowledge of God and his great love. The Spirit enables us to experience the love of God and to be assured of the Lord's abiding presence with us (see Romans 8:35-39). The Holy Spirit also opens our ears to hear and understand the word of God. Do you listen attentively to God's word and believe it? Ask the Holy Spirit to inflame your heart with the love of God and his word.

The true nature of peace

Do you know the peace which surpasses all understanding (Philippians 4:7)? In his farewell discourse Jesus grants *peace* as his gift to his disciples. What kind of peace does he offer? The *peace of Christ* is more than the absence of trouble. It includes everything which makes for our highest good. The world's approach to peace is avoidance of trouble and a refusal to face unpleasant things. Jesus offers the peace which conquers our fears and anxieties. Nothing can take us from the peace and joy of Jesus Christ. No sorrow or grief, no danger, no suffering can make it less.

How can we attain the peace which the Lord Jesus offers his followers? Through the gift and work of the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, the Lord Jesus shows us how to yield our passions of anger, fear, and pride to him so we can receive his gift of peace. The Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness and strengthens us with his gifts and supernatural virtues which enable us to live as wise and holy disciples of Christ.

Caesarius of Arles (470-542 AD), an early church bishop in Gaul who was noted for his godly wisdom and preaching of Scripture, linked peace with the character of Christ and the Christlike virtues which help us to grow as disciples of Jesus Christ. Caesarius describes some of the key character traits (virtues) which form us into true people of peace:

"Peace, indeed, is serenity of mind, tranquillity of soul, simplicity of heart, the bond of love, the fellowship of charity. It removes hatred, settles wars, restrains wrath, tramples on pride, loves the humble, pacifies the discordant and makes enemies agree. For it is pleasing to everyone. It does not seek what belongs to another or consider anything as its own. It teaches people to love because it does not know how to get angry, or to extol itself or become inflated with pride. It is meek and humble to everyone, possessing rest and tranquillity within itself. When the peace of Christ is exercised by a Christian, it is brought to perfection by Christ. If anyone loves it, he will be an heir of God, while anyone who despises it rebels against Christ.

"When our Lord Jesus Christ was returning to the Father, he left his peace to his followers as their inherited good, teaching them and saying, 'My peace I give to you, my peace I leave with you.' Anyone who has received this peace should keep it, and one who has destroyed it should look for it, while anyone who has lost it should seek it. For if anyone is not found with it, he will be disinherited by the Father and deprived of his inheritance." (*Sermon 174.1*)

Daily Quote from the early church fathers: *God is pleased to dwell in us*, by Augustine of Hippo, 354-430 A.D.

"God is not too grand to come, he is not too fussy or shy, he is not too proud - on the contrary he is pleased to come if you do not displease him. Listen to the promise he makes. Listen to him indeed promising with pleasure, not threatening in displeasure, "We shall come to him," he says, "I and the Father." To the one he had earlier called his friend, the one who obeys his precepts, the keeper of his commandment, the lover of God, the lover of his neighbour, he says, "We shall come to him and make our abode with him."

OPENING PRAYER "Lord Jesus, in love you created me and you drew me to yourself. May I never lose sight of you nor forget your steadfast love and faithfulness. And may I daily dwell upon your word and give you praise in the sanctuary of my heart, You who are my All."

Amen.

CLOSING PRAYER:- "I believe in Your Love"

Father of love hear my prayer. Help me to know Your Will and to do it with courage and faith. Accept my offering of myself, all my thoughts, words, deeds, and sufferings. May my life be spent giving You glory. Give me the strength to follow Your call, so that Your Truth may live in my heart and bring peace to me and to those I meet, for I believe in Your Love.

Amen.