

## **6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter, Cycle C: May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2010**

Today, we are asked through our readings to consider a state of being that we refer to as "peace". And one way that we as humans have found to probe the states of being, such as "peace and love", is through art whether it be through painting, song or statuary. For example, Rodin in his statue "The Kiss", as well as, numerous songwriters has addressed the subject of love and in their art. And within this body of work we can find songs that are so sappy and saccharine that they bear little resemblance to reality. Another genre of song concerning love, such as "The Impossible Dream" from "The Man of La Mancha", is so overly dramatic that you feel that it should only be played by Montovani's Orchestra. Now the more mature members of our gathering will need to explain to our juniors just who Montovani was, because you will know what I'm speaking of.

Now both the statue and the song represent two extremes and it is my contention that neither represents "true peace or love", because "True Peace" isn't the peace referred to on some greeting card nor is it a pompous and over-inflated state of being. Well, Fr. Michael, you might ask, just what is it? And like "love", there are probably just as many ideas defining "peace" as there are people in our congregation right now. It's not easy to come to a consensus on its definition, but today's Gospel gives us clues as to two aspects of peace.

First, "peace" is a gift. Jesus made that pretty clear to his disciples at the "Last Supper" when he said: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you". Thus, "True Peace" comes from God and He gives it freely and generously. We can't "earn" it, no matter how hard we try to achieve it. All we can do is receive it as a gift.

Secondly, "True Peace" is not what we presume it to be. For some it's the absence of war and ironically people will often use war in an attempt to achieve a peaceful world. Others would say that we are at peace when we have everything that we want. You only have to observe or ask "earthly" rich people to know that the latter statement is completely false

Yet, we continue to pursue "peace" through excessive work in order to acquire wealth, only to lose our health and damage our relationships with our loved ones. Some resort to pills or alcohol to find a state of "peace" or in a slimmer physique or a younger looking body. Our constant struggle to measure up brings many things--- insecurity, exhaustion and possibly even lower self-esteem--- but certainly not peace.

We only need to listen to the words of Jesus to discern his clues. The first, "Not as the world gives do I give it to you" and the second clue comes from another part of John's Gospel when Jesus appears to them and declares: "Peace be with you."

Of all the things he could have said to the disciples in the Upper Room, these are the words that he chose: "Peace be with you." For the early disciples, "true peace" could be theirs once they realized, accepted and believed that the Lord had risen. That's the key to "true peace", the Paschal Mystery. When we live in the light of the truth that Jesus suffered, died and rose from the dead for our sakes, then "true peace" is possible. It's a peace that says nothing can harm us, not even death because nothing can separate us from the love of God. This is the Good News! This is where "true peace" can be found.

But, as with all of God's gifts, it's not meant for us alone. It's meant to be shared. Are we willing to help others share in that peaceful existence that they long for so much? Maybe those sappy songs are right after all. Perhaps, peace is flowing like a river and its flowing out from you and me. It's possible that we are all channels of God's peace and we could even pray that there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.