

## PEACE BE WITH YOU



“Peace be with you” (John 20:19). Notice what Jesus didn’t say. If I came back after being tortured, after my companions had deserted me – “Run away! Run away!” – my first words to my friends might have been, “Dudes, what were you thinking?”

But Jesus is different from me. He was about peace, which requires a just world, and reconciliation with God and neighbors.

“Peace be with you.” Peace with one another comes by “forbearing one another, and forgiving one another” (cf Colossians 3:13). “By means of this peace we ... cast out from our souls the disease and infirmity caused by hatred.”

The opposite of Jesus’ gift of peace is anger.

What is the point of our anger? Let me offer two explanations:

1. Anger is a shallow expression of a deeper emotion. When someone says they’re angry most often, and with a little peeling of layers, there is a deeper root feeling. “I am hurt.”
2. Anger is our way to inflict punishment and retribution on the wrong doer even when they’re quite aware of their wrong, even when they’re willing to make amends. This type of anger is likely a manifestation of our “hurt.”

In neither example is anger the suitable response. Might not the inner peace that Jesus gifted us, which allows us to forbear and forgive one another and forgo enmity, might not that be a preferable alternative to these expressions of anger?

My work as Director of the Office of Life, Justice and Peace has been a blessing to me. The gifts I have received are at least commensurate to what I have given to this work. One such gift is a deeper appreciation of the personal story that often underlies our passions. Many times this passion wears the disguise of anger and I have come to recognize that behind the anger is often a passion and behind the passion is often a story that is unique, personal, and provides the foundation for one’s outlook.

Instead of becoming angry because of another’s anger, I hope and I pray to appreciate and enjoy the gift that Jesus gave us, his gift of peace. For years this has been my prayer. And one day, my response would not be, “Dudes, what were you thinking?”

(Readings for Pentecost Sunday)



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