

Easter Peace

“Peace be with you”. Words with which Jesus greets his disciples when he appears to them after his resurrection from the dead – as we heard in our reading just now which is the Gospel reading for this coming Sunday (Luke 24.36-48). “Peace be with you”.

On one level this was a standard greeting. And yet from the lips of our risen Lord this clearly had a far deeper meaning. We are told that when he appeared they were startled and terrified. They must also have been very confused and bewildered. They had heard about Jesus’ resurrection but for most of them this was their initial first-hand experience of the risen Lord. They must have not known what to think.

And so Jesus offers them peace. He seeks to reassure them, to comfort them, to quieten their minds, to give them the inner peace they need for the days ahead.

Peace is indeed one of the great gifts that Jesus offers to all of us. And we do not need reminding how great a need there is for peace in our world today. Conflict affects so very many people in different parts of the world. The eyes of the international community may, quite rightly, be focussed particularly on the plight of people in Syria, but there are many other areas of the world where men, women and children face violence, fear, destruction, injury and death on a daily basis. They long for peace and for justice.

For Christians the basis of peace is God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Those who suffer as a result of conflict or injustice or oppression will doubtless say that they have been waiting for peace for a long time and that there is no sign yet of peace. Is not the hope for peace a vain one? Are we not perhaps fooling ourselves?

The message of Easter reminds us that peace is indeed not a vain hope but a reality that will come in due course. The victory over sin and death has already been won by our Lord on the cross and through his resurrection. Ours is a sure hope, not a vain hope.

That does not absolve human beings from continuing to work for peace and reconciliation. Far from it. Our Easter faith should in fact motivate us to work even harder. For we believe peace and justice to be God’s will for humanity and that the role of the Church is to be a channel for God’s work of reconciliation. As so we continue to pray for the reconciling work of God in our world today

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