

FROM FATHER JOHN: *“In Christ Jesus you who once were far off have become near by the blood of Christ. For he is our **peace**, he who made both one and broke down the dividing wall of enmity, through his flesh, abolishing the law with its commandments and legal claims, that he might create in himself one new person in place of the two, thus establishing **peace**, and might reconcile both with God, in one body, through the cross, putting that enmity to death by it. He came and preached **peace** to you who were far off and **peace** to those who were near, for through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.” ~ Eph2:13 – 18*



St. Paul uses the word peace four times in the scripture above, today's second reading to describe how our Lord Jesus not only brings us peace but **is our peace**. St. Francis of Assisi had a blessing that he always used. You're probably familiar with it. It went like this:

The LORD bless you and keep you!
The LORD let his face shine upon you, and be gracious to you!
The LORD look upon you kindly and give you peace!

Although most of us know it as the Blessing of St. Francis, he actually borrowed it from the book of Numbers (6:24 – 26). It's a blessing that God commanded Moses to entrust to his brother Aaron over 4000 years ago and which has been handed down through the centuries to St. Francis and finally to all of us 2000 years after the birth of Jesus Christ.

As many of you know, the Hebrew word for peace is Shalom. Now, we translate shalom into the English word peace but in Hebrew it means a lot more than simply peace. In Hebrew, when you bless someone with the word Shalom, you are

actually blessing them with “all good things”. You are asking God to grant the person “all good things” which goes way beyond peace. God blessed Aaron and his people with peace. God gave his people his peace, gave his people “all good things” and commanded them to hand down, across the centuries, “all good things” to each and every one of us.

So one of the things St. Paul is telling us in this scripture is that our Lord Jesus is our peace, establishes peace and preaches peace to all those who are both near and far. What this means, then, is that our Lord Jesus is the foundation of “all good things”, creates “all good things” in the world, and gives us “all good things” as he preaches the Good News to all people.

Sometimes it seems impossible to us, sometimes it’s unimaginable to us, that God could possibly love us so much that He truly wants us to have “all good things”, that he has handed down, across the centuries, his blessing of “all good things” to each and every one of us, that he has truly made us his adopted sons and daughters in Christ Jesus. Always remember how great God’s love for each and every one of us truly is, because when we embrace God’s love, it brings us great joy and fulfillment each and every day.

May God Bless you and all those who love the Lord.

