

# FAITH AND REASON

**Peace Be With You:** An event of importance leaves its mark on a place. Each time we see that place we recall what took place there. The Upper Room - the Cenacle - was such a place for the Apostles. How could they not think of the Passover which they celebrated with Jesus on Thursday evening, a happy, family event, overshadowed by Jesus' prediction of his Passion and death. And then, the distressing revelation that one of them would betray him.... How could they forget Jesus' washing their feet - a prophecy in action - an act of humility, a veiled reference to the ultimate act of humility on Calvary.... And then, those immortal words "This is my Body which will be given up for you.... This is my blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant, it will be shed for you and for all so that sins may be forgiven.... Do this in memory of me" And, there they are: the first Priests of the Church. Within 24 hours they all failed except one... they failed when it mattered most.

Reality dawned with shocking and chilling realism. With the exception of John - the youngest - they are beaten men, panic-stricken fugitives from reality. None daring to point an accuser at another, each being well aware of his guilt. As each one struggles with the darkness of his grief, Jesus enters the room. Jesus does not refer to the past in any way... Jesus does not say one would except the Lord of love to say. "I know the thoughts that dominate your minds. the regrets that weigh so heavily on your hearts. I would like to spend some time with you to help you to deal with the events of these days, with the guilt... the remorse that overshadows your lives. Jesus does nothing of the kind! And why?.... because this room, haunted by memories, will be, must be, the scene of their inspiration for the future.

Inspiration and experience... how seldom they go hand-in-hand..... Yet on this occasion, Jesus teaches them not only that experience and inspiration can go hand-in-hand, but that they must, by uttering those solemn words "Peace be with you." But, as always there is the human factor. We must change our behavior so as not to get in God's way. We must make the necessary changes in our attitudes, values, behavior, so as not to obstruct the workings of grace. Our attitude to failure is a very common obstacle.

Failure can be distressing, but it is also a blessing in disguise.

Making the best use of circumstances, whatever they may be, enables us to survive and to grow. Our Catholic faith teaches us, as does history itself, that it is not what happens to us in this world that determines the course of our lives, but how we react to what happens. A living center for us within a human being who keeps on trying to make a fresh start despite failure and breakdown, who realizes the dangers and stands his ground profiting by every situation, even the most difficult to grow inwardly" (Fr Ladislaus Boros) Failure can be destructive, if it is viewed as an end rather than a means to an end.

Life acquires a very special meaning when taken in the context of the New Testament: It is the seed falling to the earth and dying that may bear fruit. It is the weak being chosen to confound the strong. It is the foolish being chosen to confound the wise. It is the power of God manifest in our weakness. It is the folly of the Cross leading to the glory of the resurrection..

For each one of us..... there is an upper room. That upper room may be a place, any place, a person, a time of year, which we have failed to deal with effectively. The memories that linger can be so strong. How easily those thoughts and emotions we experienced flood the mind. This is indeed a Garden of Gethsemane in which we struggle with the past and the present. The Angel of Comfort is there but, we must as did the Lord himself, accept the Cup with love.

Fra Giovanni states in a style, both clear and simple, how to cope with the pain of being human, and thereby respond to grace however it reveals itself in our lives. "There is nothing I can give you which you do not have, but there is much, very much, that while I cannot give it, you can take. No heaven can come to us unless our hearts find rest in today... take heaven. No peace lies in the future which is not hidden in the present instant...take peace. The gloom of the world is but a shadow, behind it, yet within our reach is joy. There is radiance and glory in the darkness could we but see it... and to see we have only to look... I beseech you to look. Life is a generous giver, but we, judging its gifts by their covering... cast them away as ugly, heavy, hard. Remove the covering and you will find beneath it a living splendor... woven of love, by wisdom, with power. Welcome it, grasp it, and you will touch the angel's hand that brings it to you. Everything we call a trial, a sorrow, a duty, believe me the angel's hand is there too; the gift is there, and the wonder of an overshadowing presence. Our joys, be not content with them as joys, they too conceal diviner gifts. Life is so full of meaning and purpose, so full of beauty beneath its covering, that you will find that earth but cloaks your heaven. Courage, to claim it, that is all" This inspiring verse reminds me of an event in the life of St Francis de Sales, the "Master of the Spiritual life" as he is called. He prayed for the grace of martyrdom, during which God enlightened him to realize that "You must be the instrument of your own martyrdom" This "death to self" is the pervading spirit of the verse of Fra Giovanni. And last, but by no means least! Think of any canonized Saints: You will almost always find some great virtue for which they were famous - faith, love, sacrifice, humility, John Henry Newman was beatified recently. He was a great and profound thinker, a great writer.....a very holy man. But, at his beatification, not a single virtue was raised as a basis for beatification And why?..... everything he did, he did with all his heart and soul. So..... we can all do it!

**A Meditation by Fr William C. Mooney**

**Advent Wreath Prayer: Second Week:** God of power and mercy open our hearts in welcome. Remove the things that hinder us from receiving Christ with joy so that we may share his wisdom and become one with him when he comes in glory, for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever **Amen**.

**Comfort and Peace From the Lord:** The wicked are like the tossing sea, its waters toss up mire and dirt; for it cannot rest. "There is no peace, says my God, for the wicked." (Is 57:20-21) In God's mercy though He cries: "I have seen his ways, but I will heal him; I will lead him and repay him with comfort"... "Peace, peace, to the far and to the near, says the Lord; and I will heal him." (Is 58: 18-19). The presence of God in our life today seems hidden as life beneath the waves. Therefore, peace and joy too are absent. Daily we ask, maybe in a religious hypocrisy way, while seeking riches through unjust means. Seek me in those who are poor, those who are injured; these are works of mercy which I ask, says the Lord. "Then your healing shall spring up speedily;" ... "Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry, and he will say, Here I am." (Is 58: 8-9). Thus, today the path is known true charity, true love; the Lord is known in hungry children, Seen in helpless women oppressed by men of power; Found in immigrants who can find no jobs, sitting quietly begging for assistance. He calls us to be his disciples, to be his loving hand; We then are called to answer him, "Here I am today, I will be your hand."

#### **A Thought For the Day**

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| <b>Sunday</b>    | A Christian brings peace to others, not only peace, but also love kindness, faithfulness and joy.                    |
| <b>Monday</b>    | Be at peace with your own soul, then heaven and earth will be at peace with you.                                     |
| <b>Tuesday</b>   | From humility of heart proceed serenity of mind, gentleness of conduct, interior peace, and every good.              |
| <b>Wednesday</b> | When the power of love overcomes the love of power the world will know peace.  |
| <b>Thursday</b>  | Peace is not absence of conflict, it is the ability to handle conflict by peaceful means.                            |
| <b>Friday</b>    | The Simple Path-Silence is Prayer-Prayer is Faith-Faith is Love-Love is Service-The Fruit of Service is Peace        |
| <b>Saturday</b>  | Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. |

**The Lake Isle Of Innisfree:** I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree, And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made: Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honeybee, And live alone in the bee-loud glade. And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow, Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings.

There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow, And evening full of the linnet's wings. I will arise and go now, for always night and day I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore; While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey, I hear it in the deep heart's core... **William Butler Yeats**

**Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi (Prayer for Peace):** Lord, make me an instrument of your peace: where there is hatred, let me sow love. Where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

**Peace is our work:** it calls for our courageous and united action. But it is inseparably and above all a gift of God: it requires our prayer. Christians must be in the first rank of those who pray daily for peace. They must also teach others to pray for peace. It will be their joy to pray with Mary, the Queen of Peace.

To everyone, Christians, believers, and men and women of good will, I say: Do not be afraid to take a chance on peace, to teach peace. The aspiration for peace will not be disappointed forever. Work for peace, inspired by charity which does not pass away, will produce its fruits. Peace will be the last word of History... **St John Paul II**

For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

**In His Will is Our Peace**  
**Fr. William C. Mooney**

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