

V TRINITY 2019

SERMON – SAINT JOSEPH PARISH

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THE COLLECT / PETER 3.8

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What do we hope for the most? If we look at today's Collect...peace and order in a disordered world...for the sake of the Church...so we may go about serving God with joyful and quiet confidence.

World peace seems elusive...no more so than it was in the 6th Century when the Collect was first written...it is one of the oldest collects in the *Book of Common Prayer*. We have been praying this Collect asking for world peace for 1400 years!

We pray for peace in the troubled and war-torn spots throughout the world at every Sunday Mass. We pray for the men and women serving in the armed forces and for others who are working for peace that they may be kept safe and return home to their families and loved ones. We will continue to pray for peace even though it seems illusive in a world that appears to be going increasingly out of order.

If we go back to the 6th Century when today's Collect was first written...we would find the Roman Empire being attacked by enemies outside and morally decayed and decadent inside. The Church was not immune to what was happening in the world. The "Faith once delivered to the Apostles" Jude writes we should be defending was also under attack by forces intent on subverting the truth about Jesus.

Let's fast forward to the 1960's...another period of unrest and uncertainty. Peace seemed more elusive than ever. People wanted justice for the marginalized and oppressed people of the world. Hope was a word that seemed to have disappeared from our vocabulary.

In 1963, Bob Dylan recorded a song..."The Times They Are a-Changin'". It became immensely popular especially among young people because it addressed major issues facing the world...especially the need for peace. Have times really changed much between the 6th century...or between 1963...and now? A casual glance at the Internet will give us a conclusive answer to that question...NO!

That's precisely the point. The kind of peace we're praying for includes peace in a world torn apart by war and hatred. But the peace we're asking for is the inner peace Paul talks about in his Letter to the Philippians...the Peace of God that transcends all human understanding...the peace we already have and which sustains us even in times of adversity.

Peter tells us because we have God's peace in our hearts we shouldn't worry when we are criticized for always trying to do what is right. We should never try to get back at someone who has treated us badly, especially when we didn't deserve it. Instead, we should turn away from bad behavior and do good, always striving for peace with all our hearts.

We continue to pray for peace in our hearts and peace in the world because we honor Jesus when we do so. We are told to be persistent in our prayers and in our Intercessions for Peace we show we believe God's Holy Spirit can change lives...that people can turn away from doing evil and instead embrace good.

World peace might seem elusive but God's peace is not...we have it in our hearts, minds and souls now. It defines who we are...it helps us do his work...and everything we do is his work...which we should do with great joy...it helps us love each other and strive for peace within our Parish...and always pray for peace in the World...because that is God's wish.

The World and the Church of today may face different challenges because we are more technologically advanced than people were in the 6th century or even in 1963. The Internet gives us instantaneous access to information. But times really haven't changed much...especially for those who actively work for Peace...who confront those who seek to destroy Peace...and not give up hope.

Hope begins with God's Peace, which transcends all human understanding. Let us continue to pray for peace in the World...because we must...and pray that God's Peace will keep our hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of him and of his Son Jesus.

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