

V Trinity 2020
Sermon – Saint Joseph Parish
Father Craig Looney

The Collect 1 Peter 3.8 St. Luke 5.1



What does it mean to have true peace? The English Wiktionary defines peace as a time without any fights or wars; a state of harmony, quiet or calm that is not disturbed by anything at all, like a pond with no ripples. But life, as we learned last week, has ripples.

The Collect for today, the Fifth Sunday after Trinity, is one of the oldest in the *Book of Common Prayer*. It was written in the 6th century and is nothing short of a cry for peace. Christians for the past 1400 years, having been asking God through this prayer to order peace in a fractured world.

The world of the 6th century was very much like the world of today. The Roman Empire was in a constant state of war and internal strife and on the verge of imploding. Christians too were being targeted and wondered how the Church was going to survive with so much unrest in the world. They prayed for peace in the world and they prayed especially for peace in their hearts.

We pray for peace in the troubled spots of the world at every Sunday Mass. We ask God to turn the hearts of evildoers away from doing evil and destructive things that tear down and cause hatred and war, and toward doing good things that build up and promote peace and order in the world.

There is an alternative to the chaos we encounter in the world. It is a different kind of peace than the world offers. It is God's peace, which Paul tells us in his Letter to the Philippians transcends all human understanding and guards our hearts and minds in Jesus Christ. It is an inner spiritual peace we experience but cannot fully explain.

The Greek word *Ekklesia* translated as *Church* literally means *those who are called*. We have been called to be God's people to work and pray for peace in the world. We also pray for the inner spiritual peace that gives us the strength to persevere, even when faced with a global pandemic, and civil unrest in our own country and throughout the world.

The Church...we who have been called to be God's children...are not immune from being affected by a disordered world. But Saint Paul reminds us in his Letter to the Colossians we should be thankful because Christ's peace rules in our hearts...and we are to teach and strengthen each other in prayer and song.

In the Epistle, Saint Peter writes...*"But even if you should suffer for doing what is right, how happy you are! Do not be afraid of anyone, and do not worry. But have reverence for Christ in your hearts, and honor him as Lord."*

Jesus has given us the special gift of honoring us...by calling us to be his Church. We honor him when we ask God for peace in the world and in our hearts, so we can thankfully and joyfully do his work even when things seem overwhelming and hopeless.

In the Gospel, Jesus asked Peter and the other disciples to trust him and go out and catch people. They left their comfortable and peaceful fishing business for what they must have thought was an uncertain future.

We are asked to do the same...put all our trust in Jesus. God will give us the tools we need to do his work, and ultimately, everything we do is his work. We strive to do his work with patience and love even when things get tough and the task ahead seems impossible.

We who have been called to be the Church must continue, as the Collect tells us, to pray for peace in our hearts and in the world, and always do our work with quiet joy. And we too must go catch people...so they too will know true peace doesn't come from the world around us...it comes from God's indelible peace within our hearts.

God likes peace and order...he doesn't like chaos and disorder. We can't avoid life's ripples. With God's peace in our hearts...life's ripples can't become tidal waves of despair.

God's peace lives in our hearts and transcends any peace this world offers...and the hope we have in knowing this helps us navigate through life's ripples.

For now...let's not stop praying for peace in our hearts...and in the world.

