

V Trinity 2021

Sermon – Saint Joseph Parish

Father Craig Looney

*The Collect 1 Peter 3.8-15 St. Luke 5.1-11*



*Dear God...please make this world a peaceful place...as you originally made it. You created order out of chaos. And please help us who have been called to be your Church, to do your work with quiet joy and happiness.*

Today's Collect is one of the oldest in the *Book of Common Prayer*. It was written in the 6<sup>th</sup> century and is quite simply a Prayer for Peace. It was written at a time the Roman Empire was on the verge of collapse...and the Church was being attacked not only by forces outside...but by forces within.

Today in addition to being the Fifth Sunday after Trinity is also Independence Day...and for 21<sup>st</sup> Anglicans...the Collect is our desperate plea for God to restore order to our world and our country spiraling more into chaos and disorder. Like the basic message of the Gospel...the Collect offers hope and a way out of chaos and disorder...for all who will listen.

At the Intercessions at every Sunday Mass we pray for peace in the troubled and war torn spots of the world. We ask God to turn the hearts of the evildoers away from doing evil things that tear down and destroy...and toward doing good things that build up and promote peace.

The Greek word ***Ekklesia*** is commonly translated ***Church*** and literally means ***those who are called***. We have been called to be God's people...those with whom he has entered into a special covenant-relationship. As God's people, we are to work for peace with patience and perseverance even in times of adversity. We can only do God's work when we let God's Holy Spirit change our hearts and give us the inner peace the world cannot provide.

In the Epistle, Peter encourages us to be happy even if we should be hurt or ridiculed for doing what is right! We should not be afraid of anyone, and we should not worry. We should not lie. We should never pay someone back who has hurt us with anger or worse. Pay back of that kind is not our job. And we should always love each other as brothers and sisters in Christ.

Peter goes on to say we should always have honor for Christ in our hearts. We honor him as our Lord and Master and Friend. And Jesus has given us the special gift of honoring us...by calling us to be his Church...to do God's work. We show special honor to Jesus when we ask God for peace in the world and in our hearts...that is the only way we can peacefully and joyfully do his work

We see the beginnings of the Church...those who have been called...in the Gospel. Peter and Andrew and their friends James and John left the Zebedee and Sons Fishing Company to follow Jesus. They left a sure thing...a successful fishing business and the relative peace and security that came with a steady income...for an uncertain future. He and the others had just witnessed a miracle and caught more fish than they thought possible. Now he and his friends were told to go out and catch people...so are we!

Peter and the others were being asked to put all their trust in Jesus...wherever the journey would take them. They gave up one kind of peace...a temporary and transitory peace...for a visceral and indelible peace in the heart.

We are asked to do the same...put all our trust in Jesus...whatever work we do and wherever our journeys take us. We can be certain God will give us the tools we need to do his work. When we think about it...everything we do is his work...and not just here in Church. We strive to do his work with patience and love even when things get tough and the task ahead seems impossible.

Perhaps the greatest Prayer for Peace is that prayer attributed to Saint Francis...although it is now agreed even among Franciscans he did not write it. The Peace Prayer does, however, reflect Francis' desire for peace in the world and justice for the poor and disenfranchised. Like Francis...we want to be conduits for God's peace.

We who have been called to be the Church...must continue to pray for peace in the World...peace in our Country...peace in our City...and peace in our hearts. And we must always go about doing God's work...our work...with quiet joy and happiness.

