

TRINITY NEWS

Easter Message 2014 John's Gospel 20:19-23

According to John's Gospel Jesus appeared on Easter Day to his disciples in conjunction with his Resurrection. He said only a few words in the account, but they are a lasting gift to us.

He stood among them. "Peace be with you."

He showed them his hands and his side.

"Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me so I send you."

He breathed on them. "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any they are forgiven them. If you retain the sins of any they are retained."

We can only find peace by letting go of the exceeding importance of everything else. The Shalom peace that Christ left for us on Easter day is no abstract matter. It cannot be systematised or refined with definitions. That is a Western weakness in perceiving the mystery of our own being and the Being of God. Much as I am enchanted by the philosopher's spider-like webs of rational intricacies, I am much more persuaded by Christ's concrete speech aligned to acts modified by compassion and motivated by love.

*Jesus breathed his own person into the Apostles on Easter Day. It was the gift of himself. The imitation of the Risen Christ in the world began in a very specific sense at that moment. He left his peace with us, his person. Some people come close to this sharing of heart-persons because of the love shared between them. When one is lost the other is heartbroken. That is the cost of deep love, as Jesus and Mary experienced at the Cross. Our heart is diminished within us until in time we realise that *who* they were to us has never left us. Then we find our peace. When we realise this about Christ, then he is always part of our heart along with others*

who slide into the memory files of our innermost being at instant recall. This is unforgettable, like the Church's recall of Christ sharing his total person with his Apostles at the Last Supper. That room could never have held all of those who had been part of the heart of Jesus of Nazareth in his Palestinian pilgrimage. They were all there that night and they were all included in his ratification of the Unforgettable they had shared.

Peace comes from an outer and inner union of persons. Both use "I" to describe themselves, but loving our neighbour also goes with our own self-respect and self-esteem as Jesus taught. When we draw someone into our heart and it is reciprocal there is an exchange of being that is both personal and the giving of one person to another. This a huge step of trust, and it requires the assurance of having been loved as a child as the collected and assured basis of trust.

When Christ woke up, if we may use that term in the resurrection, He surely at once relied on every trust moment in his life. What did it all mean to him? He had raised Lazarus, but this was different. Lazarus did not go at once to God, but according to John Jesus felt he was already there. Yet the earthly connections remained, drawing him back into the personal map of his life. Mary Magdalene linked him at once to his ministry in Galilee.

Christ's Shalom after his resurrection is linked to every greeting he ever uttered because it was part of the Jewish greeting. But now it carries the breath of the originator of Shalom in the first place. Shalom linked to the Spirit of Jesus provides an enacted Shalom that breathes life. The first words at the Cross are about forgiveness and his words to his disciples about forgiveness in the room after his resurrection underline the motif of forgiveness.

Peace cannot be found without faith. The first trusting smile of a child is shed from a glance of trust. Even a blind child smiles in the direction of the mother. Faith is sensed before it draws reason into its mind - picture of trust. The reliance on others for trust lessens as we develop our own capacities for generating trust within ourselves. But the balancing act between trust in others and the need to trust ourselves will always be present for us.

People cry peace when there is no peace, though we all need it. The great gift of Easter is that we can find our peace in a never ending journey. We do not walk alone because one who walked into God at Easter is still walking with us in the pilgrimage of our life.

Bishop Arthur Jones

THIS WEEK:

April 23, Wednesday.

- **Bible Study, 10am**

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS:

Acts 21-4a,22-32; Psalm 111; 1 Peter 1:3-9 ; John 20:19-31