

16th Ordinary Sunday
July 18, 2021
“Peace, Security, and Love”

Jer 23:1-6
Eph 2:13-18
Mk 6:30-34

My Brothers and Sisters in the Lord –

Every human being wants peace and security. Every human being wants to love and to be loved. If we could have these things, then all would be well – and we could live fruitful and productive lives.

However, that is not the way life is. Something always threatens our peace of heart and mind – Our world is anything but secure – Often we love for imperfect or selfish reasons – And we, seldom, if ever, feel surrounded by love.

People establish governments to foster peace and security – to create environments wherein everyone can love and be loved. But, government leaders are subject to weakness. They can become selfish and self-centered – They are easily influenced by wealth and power – All in their own quest for pseudo security, peace, and love! Moreover, these things which they personally seek can never be attained – Because they are not fostering those same things for the people they serve!

Consequently, we have a world that is broken – a nation divided and in disarray – and even a Church that has failed to be all that Jesus hoped it would become.

The Chosen People failed because their leadership served themselves instead of the Lord God. The leaders failed to correct the people when they began to worship false gods and fell into licentiousness, injustice, and immorality.

Sadly, the leaders sought the integrity of their territory rather than the integrity of each person’s relationship with God. As a result, they lost everything. Israel was conquered and taken to Assyria – and Judah, by Babylon a century later.

Today, probably from Egypt, Jeremiah promises better times. There will be a restoration. There will be a leader who serves God – does right for the people, and is completely uncorrupt. Furthermore, the remnant, the truly faithful who remained upright, would live under the protection of the one who is called “the Lord Our Justice”!

What Jeremiah said, did come to pass five centuries before Christ. Yet, we know that the prophecy meant far more than Jeremiah realized. It was also fulfilled in Jesus himself, who came to restore so much that was lost to humanity. And it will be ultimately, and completely fulfilled in the kingdom of heaven. For there, all will be well and all will be perfect under the reign of Christ in the presence of God!

In the Gospel of St. Mark, Jesus sees the need for physical and spiritual renewal for the Apostles. But their “away time” is taken from them by the throngs who came seeking Jesus. The people were hungry in heart, soul, and spirit for the words of Jesus – Because Jesus brought them words of security, peace, and love. Jesus gave them something they could find nowhere else. His words were words of truth – words that could enable them to survive the fallen human condition in which we all live.

For we are beset with insecurity and unrest – We suffer anxiety, pain, sin, and death – All the result of our inability to love and be loved in a totally unselfish and unconditional way.

Jesus brought them God’s love. He spoke of a way to transcend all the inescapable hardships of life – as well as the evil in the world. Jesus brought us God’s truth –

- the truth of God’s love for us –
- the truth of God’s mercy and forgiveness, if we repent –
- the truth of peace of heart and mind, if we rest in him –
- the truth of reconciliation with God, through his gift of sacrificial love on the cross –
- the truth of our own eternal life, if we accept our own cross in the life we have here.

Brothers and Sisters, perfect and lasting security and peace – of loving and being loved – will be in the eternal life that we have been promised. However, we can experience something of them, sometimes in this life. But it presupposes that we live the way of the Gospel – during our time here. The problems of our world, our nation, and our Church exist because we have failed – and our leaders have failed.

So let us pray that we can do better from this time on – And may we, at least, become the new remnant who are always faithful.

Amen.

July 18, 2021

Msgr. Russell G. Terra