

From the Rector's Study, the Rev. Bryce Sangster

Sunday, June 25th, 2023, Pentecost IV

Genesis 21:8-21; Psalm 86:1-10, 16-17; Romans 6:1b-11; Matthew 10:24-39

Is there anybody who is not surprised and perhaps a little disappointed in Jesus saying that he came not to bring peace but a sword. And that there will be divisions in the family, with conflict a disagreement?

I think the problem is not the divisions and disagreements but the resolutions or the lack there of.

I am not the only one who asks during marriage preparation how do you fight? And we often get the answer we are in love we don't fight. Thus, this is a warning for us to prepare for conflict and being able to get beyond it.

Another way of looking at this, what Jesus is saying about peace and a sword is that I did not come to bring peace at the beginning but if you have faith in the end movement towards peace. Peace that is not just an absence of conflict but peace with justice.

Maybe that is what Jesus means when he tells us to take up our cross and follow him. The idea sacrifice comes to mind obviously, but the answer is never sacrifice without a purpose.

I have suggested previously to take up our cross is to metaphorically get on the cross and be at the point of intersection between God and others. In thinking of this in the context of the sword and peace, perhaps calls us and challenges us to be an instrument of peace, where there is conflict.

What does this remind us of?

Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi (Prayer for Peace)

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:

where there is hatred, let me sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;

where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;

where there is sadness, joy.

*O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,*

*to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.*

There is a famous quote from a colleague of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Martin Niemöller.

First, they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a socialist.

Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a trade unionist.

Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me.

Amen

May God give to you and to all those you love
his comfort and his peace,
his light and his joy,
in this world and the next;
and the blessing ...