

Commentary on the Gospel for Tue, Apr 26th 2016

History is full of great farewell addresses; from George Washington's printed farewell address announcing he would not seek a third term to Lou Gehrig's "I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of this earth" speech, to name but a few. Farewell speeches often crystalize the moment and put a focus on the here and now as well as a glimpse into the future. But the greatest farewell address of all time was given almost two centuries ago by Jesus. In his farewell address at the Last Supper before his upcoming betrayal by Judas, Jesus provides us with two of the most comforting thoughts about the here and now and about our future that are found in the Bible.

The first is in his the phrase, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you," is rich with meaning. To me, the peace that Christ left his disciples was not peace of mind, peace and quiet, to rest in peace or keeps the peace. No, it was much deeper. For the peace Jesus gave his disciples and likewise to each of us was the peace that passes all understanding. A peace that allows us to conquer all of our fears worries and anguish because we know that God's love is with us always. Peace, knowing that the hand of God is constantly on our shoulder; helping us, guiding us and supporting us whenever we feel the need to call upon him. So in times of stress, tension and turmoil remember the great inheritance Christ left us through these powerful words, Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.

Equally as powerful are the words, "Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid. You heard me tell you, I am going away and I will come back to you." This was Jesus's promise made during the Last Supper to reassure his disciples, to give them a glimpse of his future and theirs, that even though he was about to be crucified he would not be forsaking them and he would return. Today, these words resonate with me at funerals for they remind and assure me that I should not be troubled by the death of my friend or a loved one but rather rejoice in knowing that they are the beneficiary of this great promise made in the Upper Room for they are now with Christ and are sharing in the promise of eternal glory.

So, as we find time in this hectic world to gather our thoughts and reflect on our day take great comfort in these words for they are God's assurance that we are enveloped in his constant love and peace and that He will be there for us in the end.

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