

Homily based on the readings from May 5, 2026 (Acts 14.19-28; John 14.27-31a)

*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.* We hear this verse from today's Gospel – albeit with slightly different wording – every time we come to Mass, immediately after the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer. Like the Lord's Prayer itself, we are probably so accustomed to this phrase that we rarely stop to consider what it is actually saying. As with all of Jesus' teachings, there is a level of meaning that we need to be careful not to overlook.

The most obvious question, of course, is what Our Lord means by the word *peace*. The most basic definition – the absence of conflict – makes very little sense in this context. Remember that Jesus is addressing his disciples on the night before his own brutal execution. He is perfectly aware of what is coming, including the cruelty and suffering he will be forced to endure.

The solution to this paradox, of course, appears in the next line of the Gospel: “Not as the world gives do I give it to you.” In other words, although Christ does indeed bring us peace, it is not in a form the world is capable of comprehending. Following Christ does not mean that we will never experience violence or persecution – in fact, quite the opposite. What Jesus is offering is entirely different, a peace (to quote Saint Paul) “that surpasses all understanding.”

The point, of course, is that the Peace of Christ is completely alien to this fallen world – although we may still be able to catch fleeting glimpses of its eternal reality. This peace does not depend on any sort of human action – such as an alliance or a treaty – but is foundational to God’s very *existence*. It is not a status, but a *relationship* – a reflection of the primeval love that *is* the Holy Trinity itself. What does Christ himself tell his disciples? “I am going to the Father.” *That* is the peace he is preparing to experience, the peace to which he is inviting all his faithful servants.

There is another prayer for peace, of course, that we repeat at every

Mass:

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, grant us peace.

Every time we speak these words, as we prepare to receive Our Lord in the Holy Eucharist, we must remember what we are asking for – not protection from violence, not even spiritual renewal – but that Christ will carry us swiftly to the place he has prepared for each of us in his Father's house, gathering us in eternal happiness before his glorious throne.