



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS **GENERAL AUDIENCE** *Library of the Apostolic Palace*

Wednesday, 15 April 2020 **[Multimedia]**

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning,

Today's catechesis is dedicated to the seventh Beatitude, the one on the "peacemakers" who are proclaimed children of God. I am pleased that it falls immediately after Easter because Christ's peace is the fruit of his death and resurrection as we heard in the Reading of Saint Paul. In order to understand this Beatitude, we have to explain the meaning of the word "*peace*" which can be misinterpreted, or at times trivialized.

We must look at two ideas of peace: the first is the Biblical one, in which the beautiful word *shalòm* appears, which expresses abundance, flourishing, wellbeing. In Hebrew, when one says *shalòm*, one is wishing a beautiful, fulfilled and prosperous life, but also in terms of truth and justice that will find fulfillment in the Messiah, the Prince of Peace (cf. Is 9:6; Mic 5:4-5).

There is also another more widespread meaning in which the word "peace" is understood as a sort of interior serenity; I am calm, I am at peace. This is a modern, psychological and more subjective idea. We generally think that peace is stillness, harmony, inner balance. This accepted meaning of the word "peace" is incomplete and cannot be made absolute because anxiety can be an important time of growth.

The Lord himself often sows anxiety in us so that we may go towards him, to find him. In this sense, it is an important moment of growth. Meanwhile, it can happen that inner tranquility corresponds to a trained conscience and not to true spiritual redemption. The Lord often has to be "a sign of contradiction (cf. Lk 2:34-35), shaking our false securities in order to bring us to salvation. And in that moment, it seems we have no peace but it is the Lord who puts us on this path so that we may attain the peace that he himself will give to us.

At this point we have to remember that when the Lord says: "Peace, I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you" (Jn 14:27), he means *his* peace which is

different from the human kind, the one of the world. Jesus' peace is different from the worldly one.

Let us ask ourselves: how does the world give peace? If we think of armed conflicts, wars normally end in two ways: either with the defeat of one of the two sides, or with a peace treaty. We cannot but hope and pray that this second path will always be taken. However, we have to consider that history is an infinite series of peace treaties contradicted by successive wars or by the metamorphosis of these same wars into other ways or into other places.

In our time too, war is being fought "piecemeal" in various scenarios and with different methods (cf. [*Homily at the Military Memorial in Redipuglia*](#), 13 September 2014; [*Homily in Sarajevo*](#), 6 June 2015; [*Address to the Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts*](#), 21 February 2020). We have to at least suspect that within the framework of a globalization that is carried out above all for economic or financial interests, the "peace" of some corresponds to the "war" of others. And this is not Christ's peace.

Instead, how does the Lord Jesus "give" his peace? We have heard Saint Paul say that Christ's peace is "making one out of two" (cf. Eph 2:14), erasing hostility and reconciling. And the path to carry out this work of peace is his body. Indeed he reconciles all things and bestows peace with the blood of his cross as the same Apostle says elsewhere (cf. Col 1:20).

And here, I ask myself, we can all ask ourselves: who then are the "peacemakers?". The seventh Beatitude is the most active one, explicitly operative; the verbal expression is similar to the one used in the first verse of the Bible for the Creation, and it indicates initiative and industriousness. Love by its nature is creative — love is always creative — and seeks reconciliation at any cost.

Those who have learned the art of peace and exercise it are called the children of God. They know that there can be no reconciliation without giving one's own life and that peace should always be sought everywhere. Always and everywhere: Do not forget this! It should be sought this way. It is not an autonomous work that is the fruit of one's own abilities. It is the manifestation of the grace received from Christ who is our peace and who has made us Children of God.

May the true *shalòm* and the true interior balance spring forth from Christ's peace which comes from the Cross and generates a new humanity, embodied by an infinite multitude of inventive, creative Saints who have designed ever new paths to love; Saints who build peace. This life, as children of God who for Christ's blood, seek and find their brothers and sisters, is true happiness. Blessed are those who follow this path. And once again, I wish you all a Happy Easter, in the peace of Christ.

Special Greetings

I greet the English-speaking faithful joining us through the media. In the joy of the Risen Christ, I invoke upon you and your families the loving mercy of God our Father. May the Lord bless you!

Lastly, I greet young people, the sick, the elderly and newlyweds. My dearest ones, I urge you to look constantly to Jesus who defeated death and who helps us to welcome life's suffering and trials as a precious opportunity for redemption and salvation. May the Lord bless you and may the Virgin Mary protect you!