

From the Bishop - Synod Implementation

JESUS OFFERS PEACE FOR STRESSFUL LIVES

Stresses today affect us all. There are emotional stresses, employment stresses, economic stresses. There are stresses too in marriages and families, friendship and work places.

There are stresses also caused by increasing conflict. We see this in society as well as overseas. 'Wellness' programmes are increasing. So are the demands on school psychologists due to young people suffering the consequence of family and other conflict.

This is not the peace the Risen Jesus wished his disciples in his resurrection appearances. The night before he died, he gave the Eucharist as a means for growing peace in the lives of his followers. Today, many do not know how to draw on this means.

Do I actually seek the Risen Jesus?

Jesus promised to be present to those who seek him after his Resurrection in a number of ways. The most important of these is the Eucharist.

However, to experience him, we must actually seek him. It is not enough just to be present. We need to be conscious that we are gathering in his presence and bring him our life needs.

Do I bring to Jesus my concerns and needs? The Collect Prayer

The Eucharist is the prayer of the Risen Jesus, the Son of God, to God the Father. His prayer is perfect and is granted always. In the Mass he makes our prayers his own. He is present spiritually wherever 'two or three are present in my name', as in the Eucharist. ¹

What prayers do I place before him in the Mass when, before the Collect Prayer, the celebrant invites: 'Let us pray'. Are there any heart worries or concerns that are personal or for others I do not mention to the Risen Jesus in the silence?

I will always find at least a little sense of peace growing in my heart even if the prayer seems unanswered or not answered as I asked because God knows that this would not be good for me. ² Jesus promised prayers for needs will always be answered, but when and in ways God knows will be best for us.

Many today lack peace and remain with their worries because they don't seek peace from Christ.

Do I bring Jesus questions that are bothering me? Liturgy of the Word

Jesus promised guidance for our lives through the Holy Spirit after his Resurrection. The Risen Jesus is present spiritually in liturgies of the word, offering guidance through the Holy Spirit.

Are there questions in my heart that I do not bring to Mass? About God our doubts about faith? About daily life worries; decisions to be made; anxieties and insecurities; the meaning of life or suffering; relationships? The list is endless. The Spirit leads gradually to answers based upon Jesus' teachings. ³ We listen, therefore, to the Liturgy of the Word.

¹ Matthew 18:20

² Matthew 7:7-11

³ John

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We try to see what the teaching of Jesus is asking for from my life. As we continue to pray daily for guidance, we discover insights and thoughts which come together and the guidance becomes clear.

Many today lack peace and suffer confusion and lack of direction and make bad decisions God never intended. They sought no guidance from the Risen Jesus.

Do I bring to Jesus my life challenges? The Eucharistic Prayer

The climax of the Eucharist is when the Risen Jesus becomes fully present – *body and blood, divine and human* – and offers himself in sacrifice to God the Father in the Eucharistic Prayer. He is not present only spiritually but fully.

We join him in this sacrifice by offering our lives: our married, family or unmarried lives; our daily work and home routines; of efforts to do good and our struggles against temptations to sin; our sufferings, loneliness and experiences for which we are thankful.

As he looks into our hearts during a Mass, does Jesus see any life hurts for which I don't seek healing? Grief for which I don't seek consolation?

Are there teachings or ideals Jesus taught that we need his help to live? Weaknesses we are struggling with or behaviours we can't seem to change?

Many today suffer hurts and griefs; failures in relationships and regrets instead of inner peace because they try to live without the Risen Jesus.

Do we share intimately with the Risen Jesus? The Communion Rite

Communion is the intimacy of sharing hearts. The Communion Rite is about sharing with Jesus at a heart level what perhaps we would never share with another person.

During this Rite, we receive the Risen Jesus, Body and Blood in Holy Communion. In the silence after the hymn, we thank him for coming into our hearts. We thank him too for blessings and joys in our lives. We share secret fears and worries, burdens and struggles.

Again, many lack the peace that Christ brings by not talking with him in the silence after Holy communion.

Let us always seek him

Let us not celebrate Easter as a historical event, but the Risen Jesus who is always present, waiting for us to call on him.

Let us seek his Easter peace, particularly through the Eucharist, in our troubled world.