

O Lord Jesus Christ, You have gone to the Father to prepare a place of peace for us: Grant us so to live in communion with You here on earth, that hereafter we may enjoy the fullness of Your presence; You who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, now and forever. Amen. (Parish Prayers, ed. Frank Colquhoun, p. 89)

[Jesus said:] "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in Me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to Myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way to where I am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going. How can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also. From now on you do know Him and have seen Him." Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know Me, Philip? Whoever has seen Me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own authority, but the Father who dwells in Me does His works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me, or else believe on account of the works themselves." Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in Me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father."

In Christ Jesus, who desires our hearts to be at peace now and forevermore, dear fellow redeemed:

You have all experienced times and places of unrest. It can be a hostile work environment. It can perhaps be in a group of peers but among them there is a bully who has targeted you as a threat to knock down and drive away from his/her territory. It can be at a sports venue; in line at a store on Black Friday. In such places of unrest you desire to return home where you will find safety and peace with those who love you. But sadly home can also become a place of unrest on account of the sins of those living under the same roof with you or even from your own disrespectful acts and unkind words toward them.

In our text, Jesus addresses His disciples who were soon facing days of great unrest in Jerusalem and beyond, starting with His arrest and crucifixion. So as He prepared them, so He prepares us today:
Troubled Hearts Will Always Be at Peace in the Father's House.

Our places of unrest are found almost anywhere. It can be in the doctor's office hearing a diagnosis, with our accountant around April 15, from a middle of the night phone call from the police or the emergency room. Our personal peace can be disrupted in numerous ways. Our crucified and risen Lord Jesus came so that we may have peace and beyond what the world can offer with its temporary fixes.

Jesus says to us also today: "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in Me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to Myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way to where I am going." The presence of Jesus always brings peace to the believer. With Him we are forgiven and are received not with condemnation and judgment but with complete acceptance for the sake of our Savior.

Heaven, the Father's house, which Jesus secured for us with His holy precious blood is a secure place of serenity to which we will one day be brought. Jesus Himself is the Way to our heavenly rest. So many, even who call themselves Christians, will imagine that Jesus has left us to find and develop our own way to heaven. But as Jesus clearly states to Thomas: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." Besides Jesus being THE way, He promises to take you to Himself.

Here our peace can be disturbed and broken, but not once we arrive safely in our Father's house. Consider these contrasts: *"We sojourn here; there in heaven we abide. We labor here; there we rest. This life is a road; the one to come is a homeland. Here we fight enemies; there we reign unopposed. Here we struggle to curb fleshly lusts; there we rejoice without a single temptation. Here we are concerned about losses; there we are secure in victorious peace. Here we forgive the guilt of others and need forgiveness for our sins; there we suffer nothing more that we need to forgive, nor have reason to repent ourselves. Here we have numerous disappointments; there we have only blessedness. Here we behold evil within and without; there we see only good."* (cf. *Manual of Comfort*, pp. 74-75).

II

Now of course, you and I can become impatient waiting for the fulfillments of this promised place of peace, just as Jesus' disciples were in our text. Philip said to Him: "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know Me, Philip? Whoever has seen Me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me?"

You see, my fellow pilgrims even in this life of unrest, insecurity and uncertainty, Jesus does not want our hearts to be troubled. He does not say one day you will have reason not to be troubled, but right here and now we have reason to find the peace He has secured for us even as we dwell in these our days of our troubling pilgrimage. The Father's house is here among us. Wherever Jesus is to be found, so is the Father. It is a gracious presence bestowing upon us an everlasting peace with all our sins forgiven.

What things are troubling your hearts these days? Are they spiritual concerns regarding repeated sins, doubts, fears, a haunting past? Are they physical concerns regarding a bleak diagnosis, the loss of a dear one, financial down turns, geo-political threats? Or a combination in which you have physical concerns leading to spiritual crises? Whatever they are, no doubt they are common among us all in various forms. In part that is why our Lord has called us together as brothers and sisters, not only to pray for one another, but to show care and concern with our words and deeds. We are part of the Father's house now as true children adopted through the blood and righteousness of the only begotten Son.

The bliss of the Father's house can seem so distant to us during these days of our pilgrimage, but our Lord promises to be with us until the end of the age; and where Christ, the Son of God is, there the heavenly Father is also. Where Christ receives us in His grace, there the Father receives us as well. Jesus comes to us as promised through water, word, bread, wine and one another. These are in reference to the works Jesus mentions to His disciples at the end of our text: "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in Me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father."

How could you and I do works greater than Jesus performed? We can save no one! Yet, as we declare the love of God in Christ to one another, making sure the Word is properly preached and the Sacraments are rightly administered troubled sinners find rest for their souls. Jesus has ascended to the right hand of the Father, not to leave us, but to come to us. In that glorified position of power and authority, our Lord sends His Spirit. He brings us Jesus and with Him the Father as well, bearing all the blessings of peace won for us.

If you were left to yourself, to find the way that leads to life everlasting, you would have every reason to have troubled hearts today. But Jesus did not abandon you, He brings the Father's house right here among you. There is no reason to be troubled, no matter how dark and dreary this life can become. Even when you failed your

fellow brother or sister in Christ and thought only of yourself, you are forgiven. You are dressed in Christ's perfect righteousness. He was filled with compassion for everyone that was in His life directly, and even indirectly since He paid for the sins of all people – those who had lived before Him, those who lived at His time and all who live after He walked this same troubled pilgrimage in this life.

You are of the Father's household of faith, my fellow redeemed. Live with calm and settled hearts. You are received as God's precious child for the sake of the work done for you by His Son. The endless bliss of the Father's house will soon be experienced, but for now this peace is still yours. It comes freely through the Word declared and the Sacraments administered. Blessed is the household of God. The heavenly Father is at peace with you for Jesus' sake. Amen.