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Peace in the Promises

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Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you" (John 20:19-20).

"On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord."

I've noticed recently that every time the news is turned on, the anxiety in our household rises. Our local, national, and international news almost always shows the world to be in a state of turmoil and a constant state of anxiety. And there's nothing we can do about it. It is so easy to pick up on that anxiety and carry it around with us all day. My shoulders feel heavier just thinking about it.

Let us remember that Easter is a season of joy. It is a season of celebration, of hope in remembering and holding fast to the promise of Resurrection and eternal life with Jesus. But we need to remember also that first Easter was a time of anxiety, of worry and fear.

The disciples were hiding behind locked doors grieving the loss of Jesus, worried about what could happen to them should they be out and about, and likely feeling anxious about the state of their world. Things did not seem all right with the world. Things did not feel celebratory.

It wasn't until Jesus appeared to them that their fear became joy. Jesus proclaimed peace upon them, in the midst of their fear and anxiety. Jesus' peace was not a false sense of calm. It wasn't meant to tell them their grief or worry was wrong. But rather, it was a reminder that even if the world was in turmoil, Jesus was present with them. And that in his forever presence, they would know peace.

The promises of Jesus are that he would always be with us:

“And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20).

Jesus promised that he would raise us up on the last day:

“For this is the will of my Father, that every one who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the end” (John 6:40).

Jesus also promised that he would return to make all things new:

And the one who was seated on the throne said, “See, I am making all things new” (Revelations 21:5).

When Jesus proclaimed peace on his disciples, he was reminding them – and us – that they would always find peace in the truth of his promises, made known in Jesus' crucified and resurrected body.

Yet, we are surrounded by an anxious world. The other day, when the news was on, our 5-year-old daughter asked, “Why is everyone yelling at one

another? Why do they look so angry? Why are they calling each other mean names?”

And in that moment, I prayed to the Holy Spirit for the right response, if there is such a response. What I told her was, “We are all human; even the people we see on TV are human, and that means sometimes they make bad decisions and say unkind things. What we must do is pray for those people, pray for our leaders.”

Those around us see how we respond in anxious times. If we lock ourselves away and bottle up our anxiety and fear, we aren’t able to reach out to a world in need of Christ’s love and light. When we react out of anxiety and fear by lashing out at those around us, we become like the world, and we lose sight of God’s image present in our neighbors.

Let us be reminded in this Easter season that Jesus’ promises always stand true, even when the world is anxious. We need not feel the burden of saving the world because it has already been done by our Savior, Jesus Christ.

So, take a deep breath. Pray for the opportunity and courage to share God’s love to another in your day. And remember Christ’s promises: he is always with us; he would one day raise us to life with him forever; and that one day, he will return to make all things right. Even in an anxious world, we can celebrate the joy, and hope, and promises of Easter.