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Peace

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Peace

Some people seek peace for themselves and consider world peace as one of the greatest goals possible for humanity. Others do not like the word, associating it with defeat, inactivity, or some other negative concept.

Peace is certainly desirable for those who suffer because of violent conflicts, while peace is of little importance for those who gain money or power for themselves as a consequence of wars and the use of force. But peace is not just the absence of war. Conflicts between or within nations arise from conflicts between love and hate in the hearts and minds of people. Plans, actions, and words directed towards the harm of others cannot exist in those who are at peace internally with God. Peace of heart is a resonance with the Spirit of God; the absence of peace reveals dissonance with God's abiding presence within us.

Peace is not the opposite of purposeful action. We might abstain from activity for a time so as to achieve inner peace, as when we meditate or pray, but our subsequent actions will be properly focused. Those whose every moment is occupied with various pursuits or interactions are often moved by unexamined and unrecognized forces that are inimical to their well-being and that of others. Taking time to choose only those actions that are in accord with our relationship with God is one sure way to experience peace even though we are occupied with many activities. As individuals, we experience peace when we look within ourselves and find that there is no conflict between what we believe and what we do.

When we experience an absence of peace, the disturbance within can be a very helpful indicator, pointing out a problem in need of healing or change. For example, we might feel conflicted while we are bearing in mind two different options. The unease we feel might lead us to carefully examine the pros and cons of the issue we are considering, and to seek God's help to arrive at a resolution that is in keeping with our values. When we make the right decisions, peace follows.

We can foster peace for ourselves and others, though we cannot force it either as a feeling or as a reality. We might refrain from external engagements, but still have our heads and hearts filled with conflicting thoughts and emotions. On the other hand, we readily experience peace in the midst of conflict, challenges, and suffering when we are doing the right thing for the right reason. Peace is not merely a physical state of being, but an inner sense of confident assurance that we are

where we belong at this moment in our lives. God abides with us in our reality, not "what might be." Many of us come home quite tired after a full day of activity, but when we reflect for a moment and become aware of how appropriately we have been using our gifts of mind, body, and heart, we recognize that we are at peace.

Peace is an interior disposition, a gift of the Holy Spirit that is quite different from a spirit that projects anger, and is manifested by accusation and attack. The violence not only of actions, but of words and attitudes that are consistently expressed in many "talk radio" and T.V. news and entertainment programs are wholly contrary to peace of mind and heart in hearers and viewers. People who are stirred up with negative thoughts and emotions are readily disposed to use violence as a means to a false "peace" which they are incited to seek through the destruction of reputations and then the lives of others.

As Creator, God is always active, but never destructive. When we pray for peace we do not just ask for an end to war, but for changes in our hearts and attitudes. When our decisions bring peace to us because they are directly related to God's desires in us and for us, we will then be at peace with one another. If any two of us fully accept that God loves both of us, peace is surely one bond that we will experience together.

We have the capability of communicating peace to others. "Peace" is a word of greeting that we might use at times, but it is especially an intention we can direct towards others as a real blessing. Our desires for the well-being of family members, friends and associates, and any people we choose can be conveyed by our tone of voice and the expressions on our faces. The peace that we want for others is also a gift of God: a witness to God's healing presence in the midst of every reality of life.

Peace be with you.