

Sunday, January 1, 2012

Christmas Octave B
Peace

THE WELL

A Center for our
Sacred Unity with
God, Earth, and
One Another.

1515 W. Ogden Ave.

LaGrange Park, IL 60526

www.csjthewell.org

thewell@csjoseph.org

Reflection from John Surette, SJ

“The Lord bless you and keep you! The Lord let his face shine upon you, and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you kindly and give you peace!” (Numbers 6:24-26)

On this first day of the New Year 2012, on this octave of Christmas, on this Feast of the Motherhood of Mary, and on this World Day of Peace, I choose to share with some thoughts about peace: “The Lord look upon you kindly and give you peace!”

Living in a culture of war as we do in our country, with its half trillion dollar military budget, we can easily lose sight of what a culture of peace might look like. We have national military academies where making war is studied in exhausting detail, but we have no national peace academy devoted to the study of peace making. As a result of this situation, we tend to understand peace as meaning merely the absence of war.



Shalom in Hebrew

This narrow understanding of peace is a far cry from the biblical understanding where the Hebrew word for peace - shalom - is so rich and deep in its meaning that no single English word can encompass that meaning. As close as we can come in English is “wholeness” or “well being” or “fullness of life” or “good order” or my favorite: “harmonious relations.”

Peace is not the static condition of the absence of war, but it is an ongoing process involving the nurturance of harmonious individual, communal, and planetary relationships. And so making peace requires at least as much courage, imagination, patience, and determination as does making war.

“The Lord look upon you kindly and give you peace.” The Lord look upon you kindly so that you can nurture harmonious relationships...harmonious relationships with individuals, groups, nations, religions, cultures...harmonious relationships with all living creatures as well as with the air, water, and soil upon which we depend for our well being and very existence.

Yes, sisters and brothers, as I said earlier, making peace requires at least as much courage, imagination, patience, and determination as does making war. In fact, making peace requires much more courage, imagination, patience, and determination than does making war.

Sunday, January 1, 2012

Reflection (continued) page 2

Making peace requires all that the Reign of God requires. The peace of Christ that we will offer to one another later in this Eucharist requires all that the Reign of God requires. God's reign requires harmonious relationships...love God, love your neighbor, do unto others as you would have them do unto you, forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass upon us... all of these can be listed under the heading of "harmonious relationships", under "shalom."

Yes, sisters and brothers, we need to recognize that peace is that wholeness created by harmonious relationships with oneself, other persons, other life-forms, and that larger whole of which we are all a part, namely Earth itself.

As never before in our history, the common destiny of humankind beckons us to this peace, requires this peace. May the peace of Christ be with us on this World Day of Peace, and may harmonious relations be nurtured and practiced in our own lives and throughout our world in 2012!