

7th Sun Easter A What Did Peter Say?

Introduction...

During the Easter Season on the Sundays following Easter this year we have listened to the First Epistle of St. Peter being read as the Second Reading.

Regrettably we usually don't pay too much attention to it.

Scripture Scholars believe that most of the first Epistle of Peter was originally a Baptismal Sermon preached to those adults newly baptized at the Easter Vigil celebration in the early Church.

Let's revisit Peter's Sermon to new Christians...

and indeed to all of us baptized who *renewed our baptismal vows* on Easter.

I First Sunday after Easter

The first Sunday after Easter presents the first chapter of Peter's Epistle.

Before instructing the newly baptized - and indeed all of us baptized - how we are *to act* as disciples of Jesus in our world...

Peter reminds us *who* we are:

Listen to these inspiring words...

*... Blessed by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who in his great mercy gave us a new birth
to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading,
kept in heaven for you
who by the power of God are safeguarded through faith,
to a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the final time.*

We are now a special part of God's family,
a special redeemed people, a sacred people,
God's holy ones...

Story...

I Am Loved By God (Jamaica, W.I. March 2006)

*In March of 2006 I helped out in our Passionist Parish in Kingston, Jamaica,
to give the pastor a bit of a break.*

had a wonderful experience.

*Our Parish, St. Elizabeth Parish, is on the cusp of a very rugged Jamaican
ghetto nicknamed "The Jungle".*

From the Desk of Donald Ware, C.P.

Gangs, drugs, gunfire and a lot of nighttime loud music – it's a tough neighborhood.

There is a primary school on the property of our Parish, St. Elizabeth Primary School.

There are 90 children in the school that includes kindergarten, first and second graders.

Some of these children come from families at risk.

These little kids know what a gunshot sounds like.

Each morning the school day begins with 30 minutes of prayer... singing mostly.

They gather in the schoolyard in their blue uniforms with white tops... forming a noisy, joyful choir singing God's praises.

The principal and teachers are dedicated to the kids.

Their classrooms are simple and colorful, with collages and wall hangings... all created by the children.

At the end of each Morning Prayer session the principal, Ms Farnsworth, leads the children in a beautiful proclamation which all of them repeat several times...

I am beautiful, I am special, I am unique, and I am loved by God.

I am beautiful, I am special, I am unique, and I am loved by God.

I am beautiful, I am special, I am unique, and I am loved by God.

If all of us could only believe that...
How precious each of us is in God's sight,
even those young children in that tough neighborhood
and in the sight of Jesus.

We are beloved of God...
each of us here in this Church today.
Are we aware of this?
Are you aware that you are a child of God.

We must go further though.
We are more than a child of God...

II Second Sun after Easter

In the 2nd Sunday of Easter the Epistle of Peter reminds us *whose we are...*
*... Realize that you were ransomed from your futile conduct, handed on
by your ancestors,
not with perishable things like silver or gold,
but with the precious blood of Christ.*

Whose are we? *We belong to Jesus.*
We are now his disciples, his people, his tribe, his clan.
We belong to Jesus.

Our society tells us what makes us special and recognized ...
if we wear designer labels, or precious jewelry,
if we use an expensive perfume or cologne,
if we are tanned or buffed or body painted,
if we make a lot of money or wield power,
if we are sexy and sensuous...

But not for us

III Third Sun to Seventh Sun after Easter

Next Peter reminds us that we will probably suffer because we belong to Jesus.

Christ suffered for us.

So don't be surprised if we have to suffer for him. Why?

We Christians affirm life.

We abhor abortion and euthanasia.

For us war is a last choice – Pope John Paul II reminded us of this, he who had lived in the midst of a World War.

Saint John Paul encouraged us to opt for a culture of life.

If we try to live these values in our society
we will probably be misunderstood, laughed at, rejected as "out of touch
with reality..."

As if abortion and euthanasia and war and even capital punishment
were the only "reasonable" and "merciful" and "just" choices a modern
person could make.

But not for us...

V Seventh Sunday After Easter

Let's just look at today's second reading...

*Beloved, Rejoice to the extent that you share in the sufferings of Christ, so that when his glory is revealed you may also rejoice exultantly.
If you are insulted for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.*

Only with God's power and grace can we hope to live as Christians in our world.

We choose the culture of life.

We are challenged to give witness by the way we live that care and compassion for others, that integrity and honesty, that fairness and goodness, that respect for people, even those we disagree with are our lifestyle...

in a society where buying stuff to pamper ourselves and constantly entertain ourselves is so often touted as the ultimate goal of life and will assure our happiness.

But not for us

Conclusion

We Christians are counter cultural,
but we are a joyful people,
who choose to affirm life,
and gladly choose to live the way God wants us to live.
We support each other in this.
None of us is perfect, but we are people who are trying.
We are a child of God and we are brothers and sisters of Jesus.

As we approach this altar at communion what do we say...

Lord, I am not worthy to receive you.

But only say the word and I shall be healed.

We ask the Lord's help in living out our Christian lives,
and in supporting and encouraging others to do the same.

We remember that Jesus promised that he would be with us.
And we know that Jesus is good for his word.

From the Desk of Donald Ware, C.P.

Amen