

## Carry Christ into the New Year!

Bishop John L. Hopkins

*"Peace I leave with you. My peace I give you. I give to you not as the world gives. Don't be troubled or afraid." John 14:27*

As the calendar turns to 2022, we look back with grief and gratitude for all that has happened in this past year. We also look to the future with uncertainty and hope. How do you face uncertainty? What gives you peace?

As a young Christian, I became aware that when I remembered what Jesus had done for me, I felt close to him. Of course, when I became busy, it was easy to forget that Jesus was present in my life. When I was afraid or sick, I would turn to God, remember Jesus, and sense the Holy Spirit was with me. With the "Trinity" surrounding me, I may not have been invincible, but I certainly knew I was not alone.

Over the years, people have given me items to carry so I would know the presence of Christ whenever I might be "troubled or afraid." I have nails from Good Friday services, a "Cross in My Pocket," a cross from the Holy Land, and a "Palm Cross" to hold on to when facing surgery.

I learned two things from carrying Christ with me. First, when you are mindful of Jesus, you do not have your mind on all that gives you fear. Secondly, when you face uncertainty with gratitude, you find joy in the midst of unexpected change.

As an old Christian, I still get sick and afraid. I grieve and give thanks over events during this past year. I cannot predict the future any better than when I was young. However, I know what to cling to for peace that passes all understanding.

Carry Christ with you into this New Year. When you are facing a relationship problem, take Jesus with you. When you are going through a medical issue, take Jesus with you. When you are heavy with grief or despair, take Jesus with you. When you do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly, take Jesus with you. Cling to something or someone who reminds you of what God has done in your life. Give thanks and find joy day by day in the year to come.

Prayer: *O God, we give you thanks for the peace you have given us in Jesus Christ. Help us to cling to that peace as we love and serve you in this New Year. Amen.*

