

The Rev. Dr. Mary Barber

June 8, 2025

Pentecost Sunday with Baptism

Today on this day of Pentecost we hear this amazing story of the birth of the Church. Jews from everywhere are gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate Pentecost or Shavuot. The spirit comes among them and gives the disciples the ability to do something they usually cannot do, to speak in many different languages so that their fellow pilgrims can understand their message.

The spirit does not swoop in and make everyone the same, but instead the spirit allows everyone to speak and understand each other in their diversity, making the early Jesus movement fully accessible across language and cultural differences. It is a beautiful image and something we are still striving to live into in the Church today.

Today we are baptizing Roman into our branch of the Jesus movement, we are welcoming him into this St Martin's community. In baptizing Roman we are promising to try to be as welcoming, hospitable, and accommodating as the disciples were to their fellow pilgrims on that day of Pentecost. To be that welcoming to Roman, to everyone gathered here, and to everyone who will come through these doors.

We will renew our Baptismal vows along with Roman's parents and sponsors, vows to worship and pray together, to apologize when we mess up, to tell the good news, to seek and serve Christ in all people, to strive for justice and peace.

To strive for justice and peace. Justice and peace are two things we have been struggling with in our country and world lately.

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.

These words Jesus says to the disciples in today's Gospel are words we badly need to hear today. We are longing for some peace amid all the chaos the world is giving us.

My peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives.

We have a lot of ideas about peace. We think of peace as quiet, stillness, the absence of problems or struggles. Peace is a lovely vacation on a beach. Peace is a perfectly clean home full of smiling and happy family members. Peace is a quiet moment with coffee in a cozy nook.

We have a lot of ideas about when peace will come to us. When the school year is over. When we finish that next big work assignment. Peace will come when the kids are out of the house or the laundry is done or the student loans are paid off or that person at work or in my family will stop being such a pain. Peace will come when these storms have passed, when this illness has been cured, when the world comes to its senses.

The world has a lot to tell us about peace, we get a lot of messages about it from our friends and families and our social media feeds. We can have peace if we just think positive thoughts. If we manifest our goals. If we buy this state-of-the-art security device. If we live in this neighborhood, if we live in this gated community. We will have peace if we are better organized, if we rid ourselves of toxic people, if we send our kids to the right schools and activities. We will have peace if we just say no.

Here's the thing. The peace that Jesus is talking about isn't any of that. It isn't a method for self-improvement. It isn't an insurance policy against messiness and chaos and illness and heartbreak and war and disaster. Because life is not like that. Life is full of messiness and chaos and illness and heartbreak and war and disaster. Life is love and joy and loss and death and new life and new joy. And the peace that Jesus is talking about, the peace that Christ gives, it does not wait for a quiet and perfect moment, whenever that will be. The peace that Christ gives, that peace is for right now. The peace that Christ gives is about knowing, deep inside ourselves, that we are beloved, right here, right now, just as we are. The peace that Christ gives is the sense that we are held, we are a part of something bigger, the sense that we belong. The peace that Christ gives tells us that it will all be okay, and even if it is not okay, it will be okay. The peace that Christ gives tells us that there is nothing that can separate us from the love of God. No one and nothing can take that away from us.

This is a peace that can help us filter out the nonsense, like a twitter fight between two men. This is a peace that can give us the strength to stand up against real injustice, like our neighbors being sent away or our friends having their health insurance canceled.

This is a peace that can help us weather the storms, the disappointment, the setback, the illness, the loss. The peace of Christ does not wait for these things to resolve themselves -- the peace of Christ is with us through them.

Roman is going to need the peace of Christ as he goes through life with the inevitable stumbles and falls and bumps and bruises. And he is going to need community, his family and friends, and us, his community of faith. We are here today supporting Roman and his parents, and we are also here to remind ourselves of the peace of Christ, that peace that is here right now, that peace that we can all access if we just ask, that peace that is deep inside but we can so easily forget.

Just like the spirit did on that day of Pentecost, the peace of Christ can bubble up inside us and help us to do the things we think we can't do. Just like the spirit did to those disciples, the peace of Christ can help us to reach out to each other across our differences and diversities, to reach out and make more peace for our world.

Roman, in the name of Christ, we give you peace. We do not give it to you as the world gives. Do not let your heart be troubled, and do not be afraid. Amen.