

August 13, 2017
19th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Jesus came toward them walking on the water
Lord we believe. Help our unbelief

The month of July went fast, and now I am back. I am glad you had the opportunity to meet the three Jesuits who came here, Rich and Joseph from Missoula in Montana and Jerry from Tacoma. They have become regulars. They say how refreshed they feel when they return home. I know what they mean. I feel refreshed when I am here too.

Priest Lake, Idaho

I spent my time at my niece's cabin at Priest Lake in North Idaho. I always find something to do there. This year, with some help from some others, we built a covered deck on the cabin. It came out beautifully. I was advised not to climb any ladders while there, but how are you going to get up to the peak if you don't use a ladder! Besides, I found the real danger was not in climbing the ladder, it was in trying to remember how many steps there were in coming back down.

Priest Lake is a beautiful place. It was named after a Jesuit, Fr. Roothan from Belgium, who was the superior of the Jesuits world wide. The Indians couldn't say his name, so the early maps have it as "The Priest Lake".

Presence of Peace

What was special to me was the strong sense of presence that I felt there, that I was not alone. Along with this presence was a strong sense of peace. Interesting enough, I realized that it would not be difficult for me to leave there, because the same sense of peace that was up there is also down here. It just has a different shape here. It made me realize that peace is everywhere.

What is Water?

There is the story of a baby fish who once asked its mother, "What is water?" How does one explain something to someone who is already inside of it? We are inside of God. "*We live and move and have our being inside of God.*" The religious language for this is Trinity. We can't explain God, we can only experience, participate in this larger dynamic inter-relating set of relationships we call God.

Doing this consciously we call prayer. We can think prayer is our seeking God, which in truth it is just the opposite. Prayer is the willingness to allow ourselves to be held within this Presence. This experience brings peace. We are always inside God who is everywhere which brings the gift of peace everywhere.

Peace Everywhere?

Sometimes we don't experience peace everywhere. We all know that. Sometimes we can feel like a fish out of water. Jesus was constantly dealing with this, with people who were fish out of water. Francis expresses this well:

"The Gospel of Luke shows Jesus' forgiving the sinful woman as going against the general mentality of his time, a way of thinking that saw a clear separation between the pure and impure. Some scribes thought they were perfect. I think about those Catholics who think they are perfect and scorn others. This is sad."

When we act like that, we are fish out of the water where there is no experience of the peace of God. Francis continues:

"How many people continue today in a wayward life because they find no one willing to look at them in a different way, with the eyes, with the heart of God, meaning with hope. But Jesus sees the possibility of a resurrection even for those who have made so many wrong choices."

Helping others find hope leads both deeper into the peace of God.

It's our choice

Whether it be towards ourselves - our families - our country - our world, it's our choice whether to allow God's peace to rise above our heads in times of struggle and suffering. We're always surrounded by water - we are always inside God. It's our choice whether to embrace this. This is what we mean by Faith - that there is nothing outside of us that can destroy what's inside of us because God's protective love is always around us

Remembering this is what we mean by Faith!

Jesus is always coming towards us walking on the water

Lord, we believe. Help our unbelief.