

Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

John and I have a deal when Benjamin needs shots at a doctor's visit. John helps hold Benjamin still while the nurse gives him the shot, mainly because I don't like needles. And then when it's all over my job is to pick him up and tell him it's okay, that the shots are all done and that he is alright. I'm thankful that for the most part, Benjamin calms down relatively quickly and is at peace. He accepts what has happened to him and is okay to get on with his day.

In today's gospel lesson, Jesus leaves the disciples with his peace. He tells them again that he gives them his peace, but it isn't the same peace that the world gives.

Wikipedia defines peace as: "a state of [harmony](#), the absence of hostility. This term is applied to describe a cessation of or lapse in violent international conflict; in this international context, peace is the opposite of [war](#). *Peace* can also describe a relationship between any parties characterized by [respect](#), [justice](#), and [goodwill](#)."

More generally, peace can pertain to an individual relative to her or his environment, as [peaceful](#) can describe calm, serenity, and silence. This latter understanding of peace can also pertain to an individual's sense of himself or herself, as to be "at peace" with one's self would indicate the same serenity, calm, and [equilibrium](#) within oneself."

Peace is something that I think we all long for in our lives. It may be peace during a war time or peace and quiet after children are in bed. It also might be having peace of mind knowing that a task has been completed. Or it might be the peace of having a friend or spouse who will stand by you in life's ups and downs. Peace is a feeling of contentment.

Unfortunately, the peace that Jesus gives to us isn't the same peace as what the world defines. The Hebrew word for peace is Shalom. Shalom is the wholeness of a person, both spiritual and material well-being. It's much more than being content. Kysar explains that peace "differs from that which the world promises, hence it is not the contentment we often assume is meant by peace. It is rather a wholeness known only by those harmoniously related to their Creator."

Peace is being in relationship with God. It's knowing that God is there and trusting in his unconditional love and care in all that we do. When I think about an image to illustrate shalom I think of a newborn baby who is extremely upset because life as they have known it has been drastically changed. As the child cries it looks at its mother as she speaks and feels okay. The mother and others that the child has heard brings the child a sense of peace. A sense of wholeness that even though some things are different that there is a familiar voice in the midst of all the new things that infant is taking in.

How might we feel shalom? Peace is found and experienced differently by each of us. Some of us may feel that peace as we pray, read scripture, or participate in a service activity. Others may feel harmoniously related with God in their relationships with

others as God's love is shared. And still others may feel shalom when they give worries and cares to God and recognize that God is ultimately in control.

As I mentioned before we each experience shalom in a different way. Fortunately for all of us as we journey through life we have a guide.

Also, in today's gospel, Jesus tells his disciples that the Father will send the Holy Spirit in his name and that the Spirit will teach them and remind them of everything that he has taught them. The Spirit will be their advocate. The spirit is our advocate.

The Holy Spirit is given to us by God to teach and guide us of all of the things that Jesus communicated. It reminds us of the historical revelation of Jesus to other times and places. It helps us interpret what Jesus' words mean for us today. The spirit teaches and reminds us each and everyday.

The Spirit reminds us to love one another by the love that we receive from others: From our mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, friends, extended family, and many others. The Spirit reminds us to reach out to those in need when we pass someone who needs a meal or a place to sleep.

The Spirit teaches us how to be patient as it reminds us of all the things Jesus communicates to us. The Spirit guides us in our search for meaning and our search for peace – for wholeness with God. The Spirit is our advocate.

As we are open and listen to the Spirit we are stretched and reminded of all that Jesus said to the disciples. Through listening, study, and prayer we gain a deeper understanding of what Jesus shares with us, and we will experience the gift of peace that Jesus leaves with us.

As we search for peace, for harmony with God our creator, know that we will be remind and taught by the Holy Spirit throughout our entire lives so that we might follow Jesus' example and show others his love and his peace.

Now the peace of God which surpasses all human understanding be in your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus the Lord. Amen.