



The Diocesan Page

“Peace be with you!”

Did you ever notice that the initial liturgical greeting for a celebration presided over by a bishop is different from the one usually heard? “Peace be with you!” is the greeting proper to bishops and it is always with emotion that I say it and here is why.

This greeting is for one thing the one that the Risen Jesus used in meeting with his disciples: “When it was evening, on (...) that first day of the week (...), Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you!’ (...) Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you.’” (Jn 20:19 and 21). “A week later (...), Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you.’” (Jn 20:26). By greeting the faithful with the very words of the Risen One, the Bishop has become the link between the Living Christ and each Christian community.



In addition, the biblical “Shalom-Peace” is of remarkable depth. More than the absence of war to which it is often reduced, it refers to harmony and fullness and implies well-being, health, salvation, in short what makes people happy. In saying “Peace be with you”, the bishop is wishing happiness to his sisters and brothers.

Finally, by wishing the faithful Peace, the Bishop is confiding a mission. On the evening of the resurrection, Jesus sent his disciples, “As the Father sent me, so I send you.” (Jn 20:21). As we, the baptized, missionary disciples, the Living Christ is sending us to bring peace to the world through establishing justice because “justice and peace have embraced.” (Ps 85:10). The Second Vatican Council calls us to it, “Peace results from that order structured into human society by its divine Founder, and actualized by men as they thirst after ever greater justice.” (G. S. 78 par.1).

In a while, it may be years, months or weeks – the date is up to Pope Francis – I will complete my mission as Bishop of the Church of Saint-Jean-Longueuil. There is no doubt that it is with deep emotion that I will be saying to you for the last time: “Peace be with you!”

+ *Lionel Gendron, p.s.s.*

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