

# FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

- *peace* -

... Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place...

(Mark 6:31)



We continue to focus on the amazing work the Holy Spirit does within us, once we allow Him to dwell in our lives. He transforms us in many ways – and this month we focus on the fruit of peace which He grows in us and allows to flow out of us.

In a world torn apart by hostility and aggression on many fronts, we desperately need the peace that comes only from God. In our own lives, frequently plagued by anxiety and doubt, we need even more desperately to come to a place of inner rest and peace. Only when we experience the inner peace of the Holy Spirit will it flow out of us and into an aching, broken world.

(On-line link) <https://youtu.be/417MI8rxCXk>

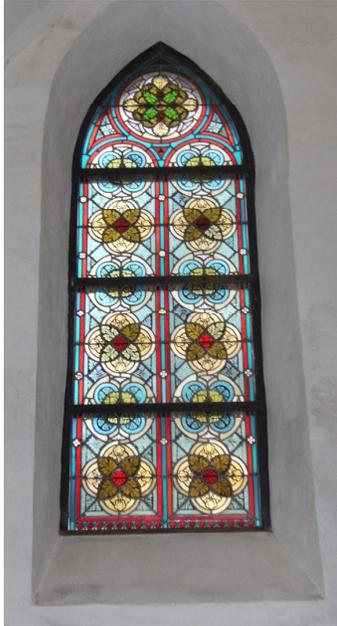
# PEACE - FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

## Call to worship

Ascribe to the Lord, you heavenly beings,  
ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.  
<sup>2</sup> Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name;  
worship the Lord in the splendour of his holiness.

The Lord sits enthroned over the flood;  
the Lord is enthroned as King forever.  
<sup>11</sup> The Lord gives strength to his people;  
the Lord blesses his people with peace.

Psalm 29:1-2, 10-11



## Scripture

In peace I will lie down and sleep,  
for you alone, Lord,  
make me dwell in safety.  
Psalm 4:8

## Prayer

"O God, you are the unsearchable abyss of peace,  
the ineffable sea of love,  
the fountain of blessings and the bestower of affection,  
who sends peace to those who receive it.  
Water us with abundant streams from the riches of your grace  
and from the most sweet springs of your kindness,  
make us children of quietness and heirs of peace.  
(*St Clement of Alexandria c. 150-215*)

## SONG

Still my soul be still  
And do not fear  
Though winds of change may rage tomorrow  
God is at your side  
No longer dread  
The fires of unexpected sorrow

*God You are my God  
And I will trust in You and not be shaken  
Lord of peace renew  
A steadfast spirit within me  
To rest in You alone*

Still my soul be still  
Do not be moved  
By lesser lights and fleeting shadows  
Hold onto His ways  
With shield of faith  
Against temptations flaming arrows

Still my soul be still  
Do not forsake  
The Truth you learned in the beginning  
Wait upon the Lord  
And hope will rise  
As stars appear when day is dimming

## Scripture

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders.  
And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
Isaiah 9:6

## Prayer

I am serene because I know you love me.  
Because you love me, nothing can move me from your peace.  
Because you love me, I am one to whom all good has come.  
*Ancient Celtic prayer from Scotland*



## Scripture

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Matthew 5:9

Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again? Have salt among yourselves, and be at peace with each other. Mark 9:50

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. John 14:25-27

“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” John 16:33

## Pause

### ***Taize - A Community of Peace and Reconciliation***

*In 1940, Roger Louis Schütz-Marsauchein left his native (and neutral) Switzerland and headed to a small and desolate village in France, called Taize. With his sister and some borrowed money, he established a place to assist Jews and other war refugees, providing a sanctuary and creating a community of silence and work. In 1942 the Gestapo occupied the house and he was unable to return until 1944. When he returned, Brother Roger (as he became known) continued to establish a community that would represent peace and reconciliation in a war-torn Europe. A group of men soon committed themselves to a life following Christ in simplicity, celibacy and community and thus the community of Taize continued to grow.*

*Each year it is visited by thousands of people (primarily young people) seeking to live a life of kindness, simplicity and community, focusing on prayer.*

*The Taizé Community is a truly ecumenical community, composed of more than one hundred brothers, from Catholic and Protestant traditions, who originate from about thirty countries across the world.*

(for further information on the Taize Community see <http://www.taize.fr/en>)

*Brother Roger prayed:*

O Risen Christ,  
You breathe your Holy Spirit on us  
like a gentle breeze  
and you tell us: 'Peace be yours'.  
Opening ourselves to your peace -  
letting it penetrate the harsh and rocky ground of our hearts -  
means preparing ourselves to be  
bearers of reconciliation  
wherever you may place us.  
But you know at times  
we are at a loss.  
So come lead us  
to wait in silence,  
to let a ray of hope shine forth  
in our world.

*Pray this prayer through slowly.*

*Reflect on these questions:*

*Where and how, or to whom, do I need to open the "harsh and rocky ground" of my heart?*

*What does it mean, right here, right now, for me to be a bearer of reconciliation?*

*Wait in silence....*

*If you like to journal, you might like to note in your journal anything God is saying to you.*



*Write your own prayer of peace, or pray the following words of St Francis, reflecting on how and where you can live out this prayer in your life:*

Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace.  
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
Where there is injury, pardon;  
Where there is doubt, faith;  
Where there is despair, hope;  
Where there is darkness, light;  
Where there is sadness, joy.  
O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek  
To be consoled as to console,  
To be understood as to understand,  
To be loved as to love;  
For it is in giving that we receive;  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;  
It is in dying to self that we are born to eternal life.

*(St Francis 1182-1226)*

**SILENCE**

## Scripture

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! <sup>5</sup> Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. <sup>6</sup> Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:4-7

## Song

May the peace of God, our heav'nly Father,  
And the grace of Christ, the risen Son,  
And the fellowship of God the Spirit  
Keep our hearts and minds within His love.

### REFRAIN

And to Him be praise for His glorious reign;  
From the depths of earth to the heights of heaven  
We declare the name of the Lamb once slain—  
Christ eternal, the King of Kings.

May this peace which passes understanding,  
And this grace which makes us what we are,  
And this fellowship of His communion,  
Make us one in spirit and in heart.



## Benediction

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace  
as you trust in him,  
so that you may overflow with hope  
by the power of the Holy Spirit.  
Romans 15:13



**GOING DEEPER:** Here are some suggestions that may help you to engage more deeply with this theme.

- **Reflect:**

When you think about peace, what comes to mind?

Read through this traditional Gaelic blessing slowly:

Deep peace of the running wave to you.  
Deep peace of the flowing air to you.  
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you.  
Deep peace of the shining stars to you.  
Deep peace of the gentle night to you.  
Moon and stars pour their healing light on you.  
Deep peace of Christ, of Christ the light of the world to you.  
Deep peace of Christ to you.

Think about: Where do I experience peace?

What is my peace based on?

Where can I go when I most need to be drawn into God's peace?

What stops me from experiencing this peace?

In what ways might God be inviting you to more deeply and fully experience His peace?

- The **Bible** has many references to peace. Here are some examples – choose one (or more). Read it through and think about the context and what God is saying. Is there anything that God is saying to you about the peace he gives or the peace he asks you to extend to others?

The Lord bless you and keep you;  
the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you;  
the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.  
Numbers 6:24-26

A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones  
Proverbs 14:30

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel,  
praising God and saying,  
<sup>14</sup> “Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests.”  
Luke 2:13-14

<sup>17</sup> For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking,  
but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, <sup>18</sup>  
because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God  
and receives human approval.

<sup>19</sup> Let us therefore make every effort to do  
what leads to peace and to mutual edification.  
Romans 14:17-19

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts,  
since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

<sup>16</sup> Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another

with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit,  
singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.

<sup>17</sup> And whatever you do, whether in word or deed,  
do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus,  
giving thanks to God the Father through him. Colossians 3:15-17

<sup>23</sup> May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through.  
May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>24</sup> The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it. 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

- You could use one of the Bible passages or songs provided in the material to practise **Lectio Divina**.
- In thinking further about **Philippians 4:4-7** what is the pathway to peace in these verses? What does Paul suggest we actually do to experience peace? How easy or otherwise is it for you to do this?
- If you enjoy being **creative**, think about some ways you could bring God's message of peace to your environment. It might be creating something (a drawing, a collage or a poster) that could be placed on a wall; it might be setting up a room or a corner where people can sit and take some time out; it might be beautifying a part of your neighbourhood to bring peace to people passing by. If your creativity is with words you could compose a prayer, song or poem of peace that could be shared with others.
- Go for a **walk**. Take note of where you see a need for the peace of God in the world around you. It might be to do with the environment, with other people or within your own soul. Talk to God about this and note what he might be saying to you about being a peacemaker.
- If you are **sharing** this retreat day with someone else, spend some time worshipping together and praising God for the peace He gives you, even when everything around you is anything but peaceful.
- If you like to **journal**, make a note of what you have experienced during this retreat time in your journal. A simple way to do this is to:
  - Thank God** for Who He is and what He is doing in your life
  - Notice** what is happening around you and in you
  - Respond** to what God has shown you, by thanking Him, repenting, or recommitting yourself to Him
- **Simply sit in His presence**. We don't have to do anything to enjoy being in His presence! We are in His will when we are fully and completely in His presence, with our hearts focussed on Him.

## EVEN DEEPER

### LECTIO DIVINA

Lectio Divina is an ancient spiritual practice from the Christian monastic tradition. Its title derives from the Latin words meaning reading and divine/holy. In Lectio Divina, we seek to experience the presence of God through reading and listening, meditation, prayer, and contemplation. Lectio Divina can be practiced both by individuals and in groups.

#### Practicing Lectio Divina Individually

##### 1. Text

Begin by choosing a section of Scripture that you would like to read and pray. You can choose the text randomly or use a liturgical book, such as The Book of Common Prayer. Try not to set a goal for how much content you will cover; the goal is to listen for God and to experience his presence.

##### 2. Preparation

Do what you must to quiet and prepare yourself to hear from God. If you need to find a quiet room, sit in silence for several minutes, or sit in a comfortable chair, take whatever posture will help you prepare to receive and experience God's presence.

##### 3. Reading/Listening

When you sense that your heart is prepared, begin by slowly reading the passage of Scripture that you have selected. Move slowly through sentences and phrases. As you read, pay attention to what word, phrase, or idea catches your attention.

##### 4. Meditation

Begin to meditate on the word, phrase, or idea that has captured your attention. Repeat it again and again.

Consider:

What thoughts come to mind as you meditate on this word, phrase, or idea?

What are you reminded of in your life?

What does it make you hope for?

Meditation is no easy task—as you try to concentrate don't be disappointed if random thoughts enter your head. As they do, offer them to God.

##### 5. Prayer

Now begin to speak to God. Tell God what word, phrase, or idea captured your attention and what came to mind as you meditated upon it. How is God using this word, phrase, or idea to bless and transform you? Tell God what you have been thinking and feeling as you've listened and meditated. Tell God how you hope this word, phrase, or idea will change your heart to be more like His.

##### 6. Contemplation

Finish by focusing your attention on the fact that God's presence is with you. If as you try to focus on God's presence you sense a need to read the text again, to continue meditating, or to simply continue talking with God, allow yourself to do so. As you do, know that you are in the presence of God.

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## THE PRAYER OF EXAMEN

Finding the movement of the Spirit in our daily lives as we review our day.

### 1. Recognize the presence of God

Be still and know that you are with God.

### 2. Look at your day with gratitude

Acknowledge God in the big and small things of life.

### 3. Review your day

When or where in the past 24 hours did you feel you were cooperating most fully with God's action in your life? When were you resisting?

#### Ask yourself

- What habits and life patterns do I notice?
- When did I feel most alive? Most drained of life?
- When did I have the greatest sense of belonging? When did I feel most alone?
- When did I give love? Where did I receive love?
- When did I feel most fully myself? Least myself?
- When did I feel most whole? Most fragmented?

### 4. Reconcile and Resolve

- Seek forgiveness
- Ask for direction
- Share a concern
- Express gratitude
- Resolve to move forward

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## SONGS

**Still, my soul, be still** - Keith and Kristyn Getty (Awaken the Dawn, Track 4)  
**May the peace of God** (There is a Hope Track 14)