Reconciliation and the Gift of Peace

The season of Lent reminds us of the need for reconciliation. If the word reconciliation means anything in our lives, it means peace; such as the peace we experience after a difficult encounter when an apology is offered and accepted. There is also the peace of sitting in a church in the presence of the Lord and proclaiming to ourselves prayerfully that we are truly forgiven.

Each of us experiences a drift from our ideals. We have done foolish things in the past, been neglectful, said things out of anger or resentment. Perhaps we’ve even done dreadful things. Maybe we recognize that we have not been good stewards of our lives. We are not at peace. But peace can come to us if we sincerely present ourselves before the Lord and know that we are accepted and forgiven.

The Lord never tells us: “First, demonstrate your worth, and then I will reach out to you.” The reality is that who we are now is who the Lord loves and accepts. Indeed, there is a sacrament available to us, a gift that expresses our desire for reconciliation with the Lord, and with each other. It is a gift that brings peace.

Good stewards proclaim the Gospel, and seeking reconciliation with the Lord, others and within ourselves is such a proclamation. The woman who came into the dining room where Jesus was having a meal, came not to proclaim her sinfulness, but to proclaim her gratitude for having been forgiven. She brings “alms” and performs a great act of generosity, kindness and service. She rubs expensive, perfumed oil into Jesus’ hair (Matt. 26: 11-13). The Lord’s gifts of reconciliation and peace are meant to be proclaimed and shared by our own almsgiving and acts of forgiveness.

During Lent, let’s reflect on forgiveness as a gift from the Lord that brings peace. Let’s be good stewards of this gift by taking steps to seek peace for ourselves, and by our own generosity and kindness, bring peace to others. If we imitate the woman who anointed Jesus, we will be, as the Lord said, “known as long as the Gospel is preached.” Christ’s peace can be experienced in a special way this Lenten season. We need only take the first steps.