

# MODERATOR'S MESSAGE 2025 3 AUGUST

# PEACE SUNDAY

About 10 years ago I sat in a hotel in Waimate having lunch with my mother who had worked in the town during the war years. She told me that this particular hotel had been at the centre of the street party celebrations when the end of WW2 was announced. She described the day and how they could hardly believe it, and the outpouring of relief and joy that came as that small town at the bottom of the world reacted to the thought of peace, after so many years of war and the devastation and grief that came with it. And we can only try and imagine how the news reverberated the world over, especially in the lands in which war and horror were a daily experience.

Peace...

Of course, not long before that, on 6 August, there was the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, with tens of thousands of people killed and then thousands more dying later of radiation poisoning. Horrific. Devastating. Unprecedented. And this Peace Sunday date is intentionally chosen to coincide with this anniversary.

Peace...at what cost...

In essence, Peace Sunday serves as a powerful reminder of the devastating consequences of war and violence, and a call to action for individuals and communities to work towards a more peaceful and just world. We also acknowledge the inter-generational trauma that comes for those who have experienced such horror, and how the effects of it continue to impact families and our societies. At this time in the life of our world, when we look at the carnage, inhumanity and violence all around, how desperately we need peace... a just peace.

We run with longing to embrace peace - yet maintaining a true and just peace is no soft option.

Today we are no longer reliant on radio and newspapers as my mother was, our many devices and social media bring war zones and sites of conflict before us wherever we are switched on and at any time of the day - we hear and see terrible accounts of death and suffering. It can be overwhelming, yet we do not want to turn our backs on those enduring horrors in the Israel-Hamas war; Russia Ukraine war; Thailand Cambodia conflict; civil wars in Myanmar; Sudan; Ethiopia; Syria; Yemen and many other places across the globe. It is confronting, but we can and do find ways to seek out the truth, to be informed and aware, and help in whatever small way we can to promote peace.

I am reminded of the words of the Trappist monk, Thomas Merton:

*"Peace demands the most heroic labour  
and the most difficult sacrifice  
It demands greater heroism than war  
It demands greater fidelity to the truth and  
a much more perfect purity of conscience."*

[From *The Nonviolent Alternative*.]

We speak of Jesus as the 'prince of peace' and also recall his words from John 14: 27:

*"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid."*

As followers of Jesus, we are called to walk in the ways of peace. To be bearers of that peace that Jesus gives. This is necessary, demanding, challenging and ongoing.

Let us take up the challenge to work towards peace, not just on Peace Sunday, but always.

Grace and peace  
Rose

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