Theme: Conflict

Isa. 35:1-10; 1 Thes. 3:1-5; Matt. 12:22-32

Most people, if asked to choose between a life of peace and one of conflict, would certainly choose a life of peace. For in the mind of many people these two concepts seem to stand in direct opposition to each other—two irremovable forces. And yet human life in human society seems to be unable to operate or make progress without these two forces operating either next to each other or in succession to each other. How many of us, e.g., could truthfully say that our lives have been without serious tensions or situations of potential or actual conflict?

The discovery of both these forces operating in our minds, our emotions, our situation leads us to rethink our sometimes superficial understanding of peace and conflict. In doing so we also discern that peace is sometimes real and authentic—but sometimes false.

A sincerely dedicates ourselves in believing that there is peace when in fact
When we begin to see that conflict need not be negative or destructive it ceased because the positive and creative dimension how he react to the situation and the issues which are involved.

This leads us on to ask: Where does Christ and our Christian faith enter into this situation? Is he able through his life and message through his suffering and death to resolve conflict and to create and ensure peace?

Traditionally, Christ is known as the Prince of Peace, the great Reconciler, the Peacemaker. The false impression has been created that he is the one who avoids confrontation and avoids conflict in any possible way. The truth, however, is somewhat different: It is in fact true that he has stated that lasting inner peace of mind and heart is to be found in him: but at the same time his own life and message portrays a situation of constant and growing conflict — just between him and the Church authorities of his day — yet between him and the state authorities, his first public appearance and the stoning he suffers in the synagogue leads to a clash between him and the official leadership of the Church. His acts of healing provoke jealousy and hatred not with the masses but amongst the leaders; the content of his preaching makes him the target of continued attacks and attempts to trap him (Matthew 12) especially because of his claim of being Son of God. Eventually, he goes up in court and is nailed to a cross.

If therefore we wish to understand what it means when we refer to Christ as the great Peacemaker, the Reconciler we should always remember the following important points which His life of teaching, His suffering and death has brought us:

1. Christ does not wish to provoke conflict — nor does he wish us to do so — but equally he does not attempt to avoid controversy and conflict when he believes that such a situation has become necessary in order to expose any form of falsehood, hypocrisy, selfishness, greed or injustice — and to bring truth to light. Know all too well the danger of suppression.

2. Christ, through his words and actions, reminds us that while peace is desired or maintained at the expense of truth and justice Christ desert esp. such a condition as false and very soon He acts in motion the forces which will reveal such falsehood and injustice. Then whereas to all outward appearances, there is law and order, if such law and order is based on a
system or methods of injustice or oppression; Christ
proclaimed that no lasting peace is possible. As the
great Prophet He reminds us of the prophecies of
the men of God of the Old Testament war-
nining us about the serious dangers based upon
the false cry and assurance of "Peace, Peace"
when in fact there is no peace!

3. Christ never promised us that in this life
we as His followers will be spared situations
of strife and conflict. What He did assure us
of was the inner peace of mind and heart
in the midst of controversy and conflict.