

Last week we discussed **“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.”**

John Dear (1959 -) is a Catholic peace activist, author, and retreat leader.

“Jesus calls us all to be peacemakers. That means, of course, we can no longer be warmakers.” Have you thought of this?

Thomas Merton (1915-1968) Trappist monk, bestselling author, and contemplative.

“If you love peace, then hate injustice, hate tyranny, hate greed – but hate these things in yourself first, not in another.”

What is Merton telling us?

Peter Kreeft (1937-) is an American Catholic philosopher, apologist, and lecturer.

“He (Jesus) made peace by making himself the universal victim, by suffering all the violence, war, aggression, hate, and harm that the father of lies and of violence could fling at him, by doing nothing in return, by being meek as the slaughtered sheep.”

Why did Jesus have to not declare war but give his life as a sacrifice?

Matthew 5:10-12: **“Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”**

Jerome (ca. 347-ca. 420) was a priest, biblical scholar, historian, and saint. Jerome of Stridon, was an early Christian priest, confessor, theologian, translator, and historian; he is commonly known as Saint Jerome. He is best known for his translation of the Bible into Latin and his commentaries on the whole Bible.

“Nothing is more to be feared than too long a peace. A storm puts a man on his guard, and obliges him to exert his utmost efforts to avoid shipwreck.” What is Jerome telling us?

Gene L. Davenport (1935-2018) was a United Methodist minister and professor of religion.

“The Gospel call disciples to insert themselves into the darkness as bearers of the light....Despite the dominant scheme of the world, now is the time to embrace the new order.” What does Davenport mean by this statement and embracing the new order?

He says there is a “new age” coming and the old age cannot tolerate the infusion of this new age.

What examples around you do you see intolerance by the world of the coming of a new age?

The disciple is “punished because they threaten the entire system. The true offense is the disciple’s very existence....”

Have you ever experienced punishment or ridicule because you wanted to do the right thing?

He goes on to say we should rejoice. “To rejoice is to respond in the midst of the darkness as though the whole world already lives in the light. To rejoice is to live in anticipation of deliverance as though deliverance already had taken place, as though the events toward whose culmination we look were already present.”

What does this mean to you? Can you live like this?

Oscar Romero (1917-1980) was a Salvadoran Catholic archbishop, martyr, and saint. In 1980 he was shot dead while celebrating mass. His last words were: ‘May God have mercy on the assassin’.

“Those preachers who avoid every thorny subject so as not to bother anyone or cause conflict and difficulty shed no light on the reality in which they live.” What is Romero telling us? What is the light that should be shed in the reality in which we live?

“The word that characterizes the authentic church is the word of the prophets that announces and denounces: it announces the marvelous works of God so that people will believe and worship God, and it denounces the sins of those who oppose God’s kingdom.”

What examples can you think of that announce the word of God?

What examples can you think of that denounce sin?

“The church has to confront conflicts caused by great selfishness, great pride, and great vanity ...”

Can you think of conflicts in our society that stem from pride and arrogance? What is the one thing God hates? Why?

Jeanne DeCelles (1933-2015) was a leader in the Catholic charismatic renewal movement.

“Discipleship does have its costs – anyone who has dared to bring the gospel to bear on his or her own life knows that. Whether we feel it or not may be a good litmus test for discerning if we are truly following on his path, or pursuing a false trail.”

What is DeCelles telling us?

If we are just cruising through life and feel no friction for being a Christian, are we actually living as Jesus would have us live? Are we actually sharing the gospel with those who need to hear it and are we willing to step into controversy in the name of God? Jesus did.