

*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.*

I have to say, I don't usually think of myself as the fearful type. I don't go around thinking of all the dreadful things that might happen. I know people who do—and I sympathize—but I usually just feel that I'll deal with things as they arise.

But my heart has been known to be troubled from time to time. I worry about my family, parishioners, buildings crumbling, our country, floods, human trafficking, finances, the future... And I am anything but peaceful.

The world, let's face it, is good at doomsaying. The world tries very hard to put up barriers between people, to make us think we need more of everything, that we're not good enough—or that others aren't good enough. The world capitalizes on our ability to be troubled, and let's face it—the world loves to capitalize on our fears.

But Jesus doesn't. Jesus wants us to be full of peace. Jesus isn't forever giving us reasons why things won't work out. Jesus doesn't scare us with screeds about 50 ways to hate your neighbor. Jesus doesn't want us to do more and more and more. Jesus doesn't want us to go home tired and completely exhausted. That's what the world wants.

So then – I ask myself—if I'm serving Jesus, if I believe in his promises—why am I going home tired and exhausted?

So I asked my Spiritual Director--a very wise man—why I was going home tired and exhausted.

He asked me what it was that I really wanted.

Peace, I said. I want to be able to sit quietly for a half hour twice a day and just not think, not pray, not DO. I want to rest in God.

He said to me, "Do it. It will change your life."

And then of course I reeled off all the reasons I couldn't do it—there's no where at work to go where I can be in private, we have glass doors everywhere—I can't go outside: it's too hot or too cold, I can't do it at home because my cat meows incessantly every time I try and sit still without the television on. Then my voice trailed off.

"You're making excuses. I know you," he said. "So when are you starting?"

"Tomorrow, I promised. I'll start tomorrow."

He laughed. "Start today."

I really didn't have time to do it Monday, but on the way out of work --I realized that if I locked the church doors—front and back--no one could come in. So, I went into the church and set my timer for 20 minutes.

I sat. My brain was like a hamster on the wheel. I heard cars outside. People talking. Finally -- towards the end my brain chatter got slower. I pictured myself as part of the big ocean of God. My timer went off, I ended the session, then I locked up and left.

I was feeling unusually Zen in the car on the way home-- kind of marveling at the light rain in patches and the dark thunderclouds, and sun coming through in other places.

As I went down the street, suddenly-- in a split second-- ALL of my windows inside the car were fogged up- except for small

circles I could see out of where the defrost was on low. I was astonished-- I've never had that happen. I looked at the temp outside and it read 53. I went a couple hundred yards and just as suddenly as the fog appeared, it disappeared. The temp outside: 64. So amazing; I'd never had that happen.

Couple hundred more feet ahead I looked at the budding trees-- all different colors-- and I was overwhelmed by a sense that everything and everyone was somehow connected. It actually took my breath away and tears welled up.

In a couple more miles I made the left onto my road, and realized to my amazement that I was at once relaxed and full of energy-- an unusual combo for me when I get home.

And I heard: "Peace I give to you. MY peace I leave with you. Do not let your heart be troubled and do not be afraid. Just sit with me."

I've now made time to sit with Jesus in silence 30 mins every day this week. I'm not getting amazing messages from God, and I'm still working too much, but you know what? I'm calmer as I get into my car. I'm not overwhelmed. I have more energy when I get home.

Who'd have thought that 30 minutes a day sitting with Jesus—not praying--- just sitting, would be the thing I would look forward to all day?

Try it.

Because Jesus wants our hearts to not be in turmoil, and he wants us not to be afraid. He'll sit with us, and bring us peace. Amen.