

THE BEATITUDES: PART VIII

Reflection by Steve Petty

The history of the world is a history of war and conflict. When you watch the evening news, there is never a shortage of stories about upheaval and tension between nations. The constant bombardment of news can leave one feeling helpless. The fact is, however, **we're not helpless**. No, you're probably not going to be instrumental in bringing peace to the numerous conflicts around the globe, but you can certainly be a peacemaker in your own home, school, or workplace. This is a calling from the Lord himself:

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God."

Matthew 5:9

To be a peacemaker means that the disciple is always trying to live in harmony with everyone else. The disciple wants others to experience a harmony that is born of love. While peacemakers seek to avoid conflict, they won't shy away from conflict if it means standing up for what is right. Generally speaking, however, **peacemakers are always disciples who try to find common ground by offering compassion to others**. They intentionally focus on the good in someone else instead of concentrating on faults and shortcomings. The key to being a peacemaker is developing a spirit of goodwill toward neighbors. We can start developing this good will by putting an end to gossiping about other people. The following is a wonderful insight about being a peacemaker from Pope Francis:

"This Beatitude makes us think of the many endless situations of war in our world. Yet, we ourselves are often a cause of conflict or at least of misunderstanding. For example, I may hear something about someone and I go off and repeat it. I may even embellish it the second time around and keep spreading it...And the more harm it does, the more satisfaction I seem to derive from it. The world of gossip, inhabited by negative and destructive people, does not bring peace. Such people are really the enemies of peace; in no way are they 'blessed.'"

As we celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus, let us also celebrate the fact that as baptized Christians, we are new creations in Christ. We are called to be lights in a darkened world. Where there is division, we are to bring peace. I'm reminded of a very famous quote from Mahatma Gandhi, who said, "Be the change you wish to see in the world." In other words, if you want to see peace in the world, **be a peacemaker**.

