

**The Rev. Michael C. Fedewa**

July 8, 2007  
Proper 9c  
Isaiah 66:10-16  
Galatians 6:1-10,14-18  
Luke 10:1-12,16-20

Why is it that summer weeks fly by so quickly? The daylight lasts longer than January and February but still there are just not enough hours in a day. Every week has seven days, but, we turn around and in an instant, it is Sunday again. Where do summer months fly?

Obviously, there are just as many hours in a July week as February, seven times twenty four is--be it February or July-- one hundred and sixty eight. I suspect that the reason summer weeks fly so quickly is because we try to do more in summer than in winter. There are more things to be done, places to go, people to see. Summer weeks fly by because they are so frenzied, so busy, so packed.

Sunday morning liturgy gives us a time to rest, catch our breath and perhaps to recall some of the events that filled our past week. Think of the things you have done this week, your activities, your goings, comings and doings. More daylight gave you more time for outdoor chores and activities. Gas was expensive, but I bet you spent a few hours on the road. Did you visit friends and family over the fourth? Were there fireworks, time at the beach, barbecues? Did you try to cram a weeks worth of work into 4 days, or maybe two? So much can happen over the course of a week. What do you remember from the week that made you laugh with delight? Did you have moments which made you weep in sadness?

Think of all that has happened over the past week in the world. There was news of budget battles in Lansing, and battles over immigration in Washington. The headlines were filled with stories of heat waves and floods, terrorist plots, suicide attacks. Young and old men and women continued to die in Darfur, Iraq and Afghanistan, and as the result of senseless violence even in this city. There have been births and deaths, successes and failures, times for delight for grief.

God's word speaks to us today and invites us to reflect on the life we were blessed to live in the summer week past. The word that speaks and the image that comes most clearly to me from the readings is Peace. Isaiah does not use the word, but he describes a most peaceful place, that of a child nursing at the bosom of its mother. The image of God comforting the world as a mother comforts her child is one of the most peaceful in scripture. Paul ends his most passionate letter with a call for peace. And central in the message Jesus gives to those he sends is the message of peace.

Peace. Is there anything more longed for in our world, in our home, in our hearts? Peace. Jesus is aware of this deep human longing. It is the first word he commands those he sends to speak. So often we concentrate on the struggles that will come to them. So often we concentrate on what he commands them not to take: no purse, no bag, or sandals. We often miss what he commands them to take. "Peace". In the Scripture, Peace implies more than the absence of conflict, and of violence. Peace implies fullness, harmony, contentment, well being. It was said of the Empire of Rome, that burned cities and scorched the earth, "they created a desert and called it peace". This is not the peace that Jesus proclaims. This is not the peaceful kingdom that he came to bring. The peace he proclaims is the earth overflowing with life. A mother's breast abundant with life. Life abundantly overflowing, not just for a few, but for all. This was the message that he wished his disciples to carry in his days and in ours. This is the gift he offered in his day and he offers to us in ours. Some accepted his gift, some rejected it.

Paul celebrates this peace as well. It is a peace that comes not from the outside, but a peace which begins with the creation of a new heart. The peace Jesus brings comes not from circumcision, not from keeping the law, not from anything the world can give. The peace Jesus gives comes from his merciful love from the cross. The peace Jesus gives arises the amazing news that God loves the world so much that he would die for the world.

Peace. This is the message we are given. This is the gift we are offered. In our day, will we accept his gift or reject it?

Peace be to this house.

How might we carry peace, how might we receive peace?

Practically, realistically, we might begin by rejecting violence and anger. We might begin by refusing to retaliate in the face of violence, by praying for our enemies; by being mindful of what we say and how we speak, by doing our best to diffuse anger and hatred; by living conscientiously and simply so we do not deprive others of the means to live. By treating all people equally; respecting the rights of both the well-established and the newcomer; the citizen and the immigrant, by working to make neighborhoods and communities less violent; by making education a goal and possibility for all, by giving young persons reasons to hope, by protecting the abused and the ridiculed.

Peace be to this house.

Summer days and weeks are so hectic. So chaotic. So frenzied. So much to do, so many places to go, and people to see. This morning Jesus invites us to rest, to spend an hour in his presence and with his people, to share a bit of time, and a simple meal. Jesus invites us to spend some time resting in God's peace. May the gift of this time together with one another and with Jesus bless us and through the Spirit of God may our hearts find abundant peace in this house. May the peace that flows in our hearts overflow, that we may carry God's peace from this house, into our community, and our world.