



## Six Sunday of Easter May 9, 2010 C

### A BEQUEST OF PEACE

Reflecting on today's Gospel, Patricia Sanchez writes:

*When, after their death, the legal will of a deceased person is read, it affords that person the opportunity to have "the last word," as it were. Some use that opportunity to settle a score, as in the case of a Philadelphia woman who instructed her executor to take one dollar from her estate, invest it and pay the interest to her unfaithful husband "as evidence of my estimate of his worth." A wealthy French industrialist (Capitaine Furrer) was so disturbed by the greed and impatience of his heirs that he adopted a blood-sucking leech and made a will which bestowed on it his fortune in coal mines and textile mills in Alsace! Others have similarly left their fortunes to pets rather than family members; the eccentric George Whittell, Jr., left \$20 million "to relieve pain and suffering among animal, bird and fish life."*

*Some have made unusual stipulations in their wills. Dentist Philip Grindy of Lancashire, England, bequeathed \$436,400 to his nurse-receptionist of more than 30 years, which she would collect only if she agreed to "never use lipstick or make up, wear no jewelry and refrain from dating any man for five years."*

*Others have used their wills as a final expression of their affection and/or aspirations for their loved ones. John Cooper Smith, of Manitowoc, Wis., left his widow a sizeable estate and to his remaining relatives he wrote, "I give you the sunshine, the birds and the bees and all the beauties of nature." American patriot Patrick Henry ("Give me liberty or give me death!") was an excellent orator and a wise statesman whose excellence in governmental affairs far outweighed his business abilities. When he died in 1799, he had amassed very little money or property to bequeath to his heirs. Nevertheless, he willed them a more precious gift with these words; "There is one thing more I wish I could give them and that is faith in Jesus Christ. If they had that and I had not given them one shilling, they would have been rich. And if they had not that and I had given them all the world, they would be poor indeed."*

*In the aftermath of Jesus' resurrection, as his disciples reflected upon who he had been for them and what he had bequeathed to them in his dying, they found themselves rich indeed—not in material possessions but*

*in the gifts of life, the forgiveness of their sins, the Bread of his Word, and the Bread of his Body and Blood as food and the assurance that the abiding presence of his Spirit would never disappoint or depart from them. In today's gospel, the Johannine evangelist reminds us that Jesus has also left his own a bequest of peace... "not as the world gives peace" but as Jesus alone can give.*

*Whereas the world might define peace as:*

- the absence of war or other hostilities
- freedom from quarrels or disagreements
- harmonious relations

*it was exceedingly clear that this was not the peace that was and is the legacy of Jesus. Indeed, because of their faith and commitment to him, Jesus' disciples often found themselves the victims of hostility and entangled in conflicts.*

*Because believers are called to live by principles that are unpopular within a culture that ridicules, negates and/or rejects their values, they are frequently and necessarily embroiled in controversy and out of harmony with the status quo. Nevertheless, they are possessed of a peace that supersedes anything the world could ever conceive or negotiate.*

*Jesus' peace enabled the early Christians to deal with the dissensions and controversies that arose among them and remain one church (see first reading, Acts). It was this peace that continues to enable believers to accept, appreciate and reverence diversity and pluralism as beneficial and not detrimental to the unity we share. Not a one time or an occasional gift. Jesus' bequest of peace engages us, each and all, in an ongoing process of peace-making and peaceable living that will come to a climactic culmination when we enter the eternal city of peace, the heavenly Jerusalem (second reading, Revelation). "Peace is my farewell to you, my peace is my gift to you." As the blessed inheritors of Jesus' bequest of peace, we are also its caretakers, its promoters and its brokers.*

### Reflection Questions

1. What helps you to have inner peace? What steals your peace?
2. If you have a Last Will and Testament, what does it say about your values and beliefs? Have you considered remembering your parish and the poor in your Last Will & Testament?

## A Mother's Journey

The young mother set her foot on the path of life.

"Is this the long way?" she asked.

And the guide said "Yes, and the way is hard.

And you will be old before you reach the end of it.

But the end will be better than the beginning."

But the young mother was happy, and she would not believe that anything could be better than these years. So she played with her children, she fed them and bathed them, and taught them how to tie their shoes and ride a bike and reminded them to feed the dog, and do their homework and brush their teeth.

The sun shone on them, and the young Mother cried,  
"Nothing will ever be lovelier than this."

Then the nights came, and the storms, and the path was sometimes dark, and the children shook with fear and cold, and the mother drew them close and covered them with her arms, and the children said,  
"Mother, we are not afraid, for you are near,  
and no harm can come."

And the morning came, and there was a hill ahead,  
and the children climbed and grew weary,  
and the mother was weary.

But at all times she said to the children,  
"A little patience and we are there."

So the children climbed,  
and as they climbed they learned to  
weather the storms.

And with this, she gave them strength to  
face the world.

Year after year, she showed them compassion,  
understanding, hope, but most of all...  
unconditional love.

And when they reached the top they said,  
"Mother, we would not have done it without you."

The days went on, and the weeks and the months and the years, and the mother grew old and she became little and bent. But her children were tall and strong, and walked with courage. And the mother, when she lay down at night, looked up at the stars and said,  
"This is a better day than the last, for my children have learned so much and are now passing these traits on to their children."

And when the way became rough for her,  
they lifted her, and gave her their strength,  
just as she had given them hers.

One day they came to a hill, and beyond the hill,  
they could see a shining road and  
golden gates flung wide.

And mother said: "I have reached the end  
of my journey.

And now I know the end is better than the beginning,  
for my children can walk with dignity and pride,  
with their heads held high, and so can their children  
after them. And the children said,  
"You will always walk with us, Mother,  
even when you have gone through the gates."

And they stood and watched her as she went on alone,  
and the gates closed after her. And they said:  
"We cannot see her, but she is with us still.  
A Mother like ours is more than a memory.  
She is a living presence."

Your Mother is always with you.  
She's the whisper of the leaves as you walk down the  
street, she's the smell of certain foods you remember,  
flowers you pick and perfume that she wore, she's  
the cool hand on your brow when  
you're not feeling well,  
she's your breath in the air on a cold winter's day.  
She is the sound of the rain that lulls you to sleep,  
the colors of a rainbow, she is Christmas morning.

Your Mother lives inside your laughter.  
And she's crystallized in every teardrop.

A mother shows every emotion:  
happiness, sadness, fear, jealousy, love, hate,  
anger, helplessness, excitement, joy, sorrow..  
and all the while,  
hoping and praying you will only know  
the good feelings in life.

She's the place you came from, your first home,  
and she's the map you follow with every step you take.  
She's your first love, your first friend,  
even your first enemy,  
but nothing on earth can separate you.  
Not time, not space...not even death!

(Author Unknown)

*Happy Mother's Day!*

*Le Paron*