



Let us go out to meet Jesus.

He opens the gate to happiness for us!

Jesus and the criminal

The bad thief is very much like me. Like the crowd, he knows what Jesus did during His public life. He does not lack faith, but he is angry: Jesus could save them, and He does not do it! Is not this our attitude in the face of adversity? Before suffering and injustice, do we not spontaneously tell Almighty God not to remain inactive, to work a

miracle? Our request then becomes, like his, an insult. [...] ⁽¹⁾

Jesus does not die alone. He is executed publicly, with two other condemned men. His enemies thought they would humiliate Him more by treating Him like an ordinary condemned man, placing Him between them. Around Him, there is the small crowd of His





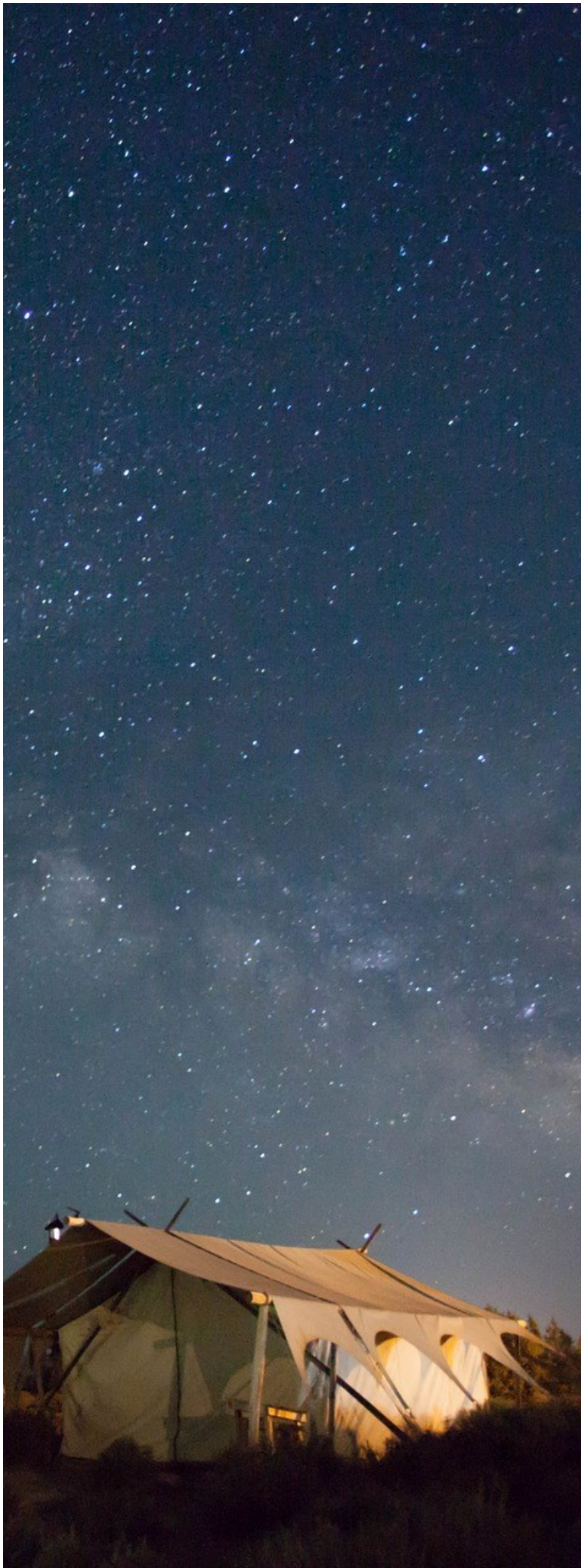
adversaries who think they triumph and who make fun of Him. There are also the two criminals. Saint John would specify, “one on either side, with Jesus in the middle” (Jn 19:18). [...]

Jesus was put in the middle as if He were the leader of the gang. Above His head was the standard sign with the reason for His death sentence. The inscription was a sort of vengeance by Pilate against the Jews who forced his hand. He had written, “the King of the Jews.” [...]

Reflecting on the Gospel of the adulterous woman, Saint Augustine explained that misery is face to face with mercy. In the

dialogue between Jesus and the good thief, the same thing happens. The misery of this man is face to face with the Savior’s mercy.

Today’s catechesis is dedicated to the seventh Beatitude, the one on the “peacemakers” who are proclaimed children of God. I am pleased that it falls immediately after Easter because Christ’s peace is the fruit of his death and resurrection as we heard in the reading from Saint Paul. In order to understand this Beatitude, we have to explain the meaning of the word “peace,” which can be misinterpreted or at times trivialized.



We must look at two ideas of peace: the first is the Biblical one, in which the beautiful word *shalòm* appears, which expresses abundance, flourishing, well-being. In Hebrew, when one says *shalòm*, one is wishing a beautiful, fulfilled and prosperous life, but also in terms of truth and justice that will find fulfillment in the Messiah, the Prince of Peace (cf. Is 9:6; Mic 5:4-5).

There is also another more widespread meaning in which the word “peace” is understood as a sort of interior serenity; I am calm, I am at peace. This is a modern, psychological and more subjective idea.

We generally think that peace is stillness, harmony, inner balance. This accepted meaning of the word “peace” is incomplete and cannot be made absolute because anxiety can be an important time of growth. The Lord himself often sows anxiety in us so that we may go towards Him, to find Him. In this sense, it is an important moment of growth. Meanwhile, it can happen that inner tranquility corresponds to a trained



conscience and not to true spiritual redemption.

The Lord often has to be “a sign of contradiction (cf. Lk 2:34-35), shaking our false securities in order to bring us to salvation. And in that moment, it seems we have no peace, but it is the Lord who puts us on this path so that we may attain the peace that He Himself will give to us.

At this point, we have to remember that when the Lord says, “Peace, I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you” (Jn 14:27), He means His peace, which is different from the human kind, the one of the world. Jesus’ peace is different from the worldly one.

Let us ask ourselves: how does the world give peace? If we think of armed conflicts, wars normally end in two ways: either with the

defeat of one of the two sides or with a peace treaty. We cannot but hope and pray that this second path will always be taken. However, we have to consider that history is an infinite series of peace treaties contradicted by successive wars or by the metamorphosis of these same wars into other forms of conflict or into other places.

In our time too, war is being fought “piecemeal” in various scenarios and with different methods (cf. Homily at the Military Memorial in Redipuglia, 13 September 2014; Homily in Sarajevo, 6 June 2015; Address to the Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts, 21 February 2020). We have to at least suspect that within the framework of a globalization that is carried out above all for economic or financial interests, the “peace” of some

corresponds to the “war” of others. And this is not Christ’s peace!

Instead, how does the Lord Jesus “give” His peace? We have heard Saint Paul say that Christ’s peace is “making one out of two” (cf. Eph 2:14), erasing hostility and reconciling. And the path to carry out this work of peace is His body. Indeed, he reconciles all things and bestows peace with the blood of his cross as the same Apostle says elsewhere (cf. Col 1:20).

And here, I ask myself, we can all ask ourselves: who then are the “peacemakers?” The seventh Beatitude is the most active one, explicitly operative; the verbal expression is similar to the one used in the first verse of the Bible for the Creation, and it indicates initiative and industriousness. Love by its nature is creative — love is always creative — and seeks reconciliation at any cost. Those who have learned the art of peace and exercise it are called the children of God. They know that there can be no reconciliation without giving one’s own life and that peace should always be sought





L'AMOUR est inventif jusqu'à l'infini

everywhere. Always and everywhere: do not forget this! It should be sought this way. It is not an autonomous work that is the fruit of one's own abilities. It is the manifestation of the grace received from Christ who is our peace and who has made us children of God.

May the true shalom and the true interior balance spring forth from Christ's peace, which comes from the Cross and generates a new humanity, embodied by an infinite multitude of inventive, creative saints who have designed ever new paths to love, saints who build peace. This life, as children of God who for Christ's blood, seek and find their brothers and

sisters, is true happiness. Blessed are those who follow this path.⁽²⁾

**Sowing peace all
around us: that is
holiness!**

(1) <http://dominicainsmontpellier.fr/il-ny-a-pas-de-fleurs-sans-amour/>

(2) POPE FRANCIS: GENERAL AUDIENCE – Wednesday, April 15, 2020

Prayer

Lord, help us to establish peace in ourselves, not like an armistice or a compromise, but as a conquest of our weaknesses and contradictions. Reconciled with ourselves, we will be reconciled with others, and we will fight with all our strength against privileges, oppression and institutionalized disorder, for there is no peace without justice. Neither is there peace without love and recognition of others, individuals, social classes, nations and peoples. Freed from all spiteful anger, incapable of any insult, make us, Lord, people of reconciliation.

(Gilbert Cesbron)