

Easter Brings Peace, Goodness, and Mercy



History has given us many accounts of St. Francis's great love for the Christ-child and His incarnation at Christmas; however, unfortunately not much exists with regards to his devotion and feelings toward Easter. This does not mean that he honored one feast over the other; Francis adored the littleness of Jesus at

Christmas, but in the same way, he lived, preached, and honored the peace, goodness, and mercy that entered our world on that very first Easter. Jesus's message of peace is found

throughout the New Testament, and nowhere more profoundly than when He chose "peace be with you" as the greeting to his terrified disciples on the day of His resurrection. Christ's greeting became Francis's as he went through his life, continually reminding others of the peace and goodness undeservedly granted to us through the Easter miracle. †



Prayer

Heavenly Father, in my times of anxiety and fear, I ask you to give me the same peace that Francis experienced through prayer. Let my words and actions be an expression of *pax et bonum* to everyone I meet.



Early Writings

From The Legend of The Three Companions

It is certainly astonishing, if not miraculous, that this greeting of peace was used before Francis' conversion by a precursor who frequently went through Assisi greeting the people with "Peace and good! Peace and good!" It seems plausible that, as John heralded Christ but withdrew when Christ began his mission of preaching, so too, like another John, this man preceded Francis in using the greeting of peace, but vanished when he appeared. Immediately, therefore, filled with the spirit of the prophets, the man of God, Francis, after that greeting, proclaimed peace, preached salvation, and, according to a prophetic passage, by his salutary admonitions, brought to true peace many who had previously lived at odds with Christ and far from salvation.

Regis Armstrong, Wayne Hellmann
& William Short, eds.

Francis of Assisi: Early Documents, The Founder, Vol. II
(New York: New City Press, 2000), 84.

Scripture

John 20:19-21

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. [Jesus] said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you."

Reflection Questions

- How can we incorporate the message of peace, goodness, and mercy in our own lives?
- Who in our lives need to hear this message the most?