

## In Response To His Question

In mid-August this year, I was seated behind a young man and his mother at a regular service at St Ursula's. Everything was pretty much routine-the welcome, the announcements and call into silence to begin the service just as usual. My mind was settled to the idea that it will be just another Sunday. Helen, our presiding priest, called us to give a sign of peace again just as is usual and I sprang into action, first with a kiss to my wife and then turned to our friends ahead of us respectfully beginning with the mother then to my young friend whom we shall call Leon Lubanga. "Peace be with you" I said, stretching out my hand to Leon. He looked at me right in the eye and ever so innocently asked – "Why?" He gazed at me as he dragged the question so that it sunk in nice and clear.

My mouth went dry as my mind rushed through all my theology for an answer only to realize I did not have much of a theology, at least not enough to give a quick convincing response to a 10-year-old inquisitive friend. That question stopped me right in my tracks and I have attempted to answer it every day since then till now. I have answered many very complicated questions in my life including when I should marry, whom I should marry, to have children or not, to freeze a human egg or not, to offer assisted reproduction therapy or not, and even whether I should give my life to Christ or not. But just why would I wish someone the peace of Christ?

I know by now you are already running the many possibly easy answers you could give and maybe some of you have some scriptures ready to back them up. BUT just why do we wish each other the peace of Christ every Sunday? Just pause with me and think it over as I have for the last 3 months. What do we actually mean when we greet each other "Peace of Christ"?! What would you say to my friend Leon Lubanga in response to his question?

I was leading a Bible-study titled "the long way to heaven" where we asked ourselves what the way to heaven is, basing it on 2 Peter 1:1-11. In the opening of this letter, Peter wishes his audience the grace and peace of Christ in abundance because of - listen to this - "the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord" (2 Peter 1:2). Peter knew that it is enough to rest in the peace of Christ despite all the chaos currently in the world, whether disease, war, famine, natural catastrophes - you name it - so long as you have the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ our Lord. Why? Because Jesus Christ our Lord has the navigation map out of whatever calamity you or we are in. Christ is the answer and He is all in all (Col 3:11).

David in his Remembrance Sunday message says this: "God is a God of peace; His children live in peace and make peace. Peace is a defining attribute of God in scripture not only giving peace but existing in peace." When I wish someone else the peace of God then, and in response to Leon's question, I am hoping that he/she has or will have a knowledge of God and Jesus, who not only has the navigation map out of whatever challenge we are in but who of His own accord not only gives peace but exists in peace. In the same vein he will therefore give you peace and lead you to peaceful existence.