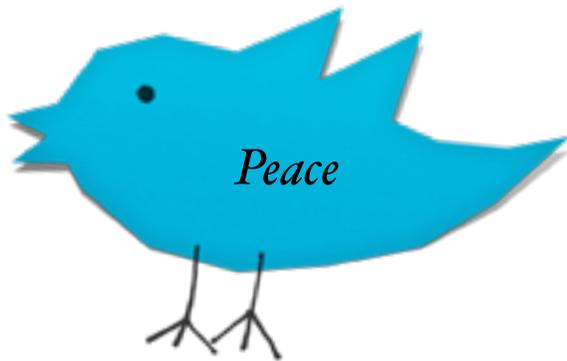




easter



lectionary  
reading

## Cycle B

### Second Sunday of Easter

#### (Sunday of Divine Mercy)

Lectionary #44

### Reading I: Acts of the Apostles 4: 32-35

Today's account from the Acts of the Apostles presents an idealized portrait of the early Church: a Church united under apostolic leadership, guided by the Holy Spirit, and spreading throughout the Roman Empire. The *community of believers* is described as a Church with *one heart and mind*. This description is indicative of a **peace** that was very present. If there is anything that history and the present teach us, it is that for true **peace** to be a reality, the needs of all must be addressed. Until this occurs, there will always be unrest among individuals and nations.

### Reading 2: 1 John 5: 1-6

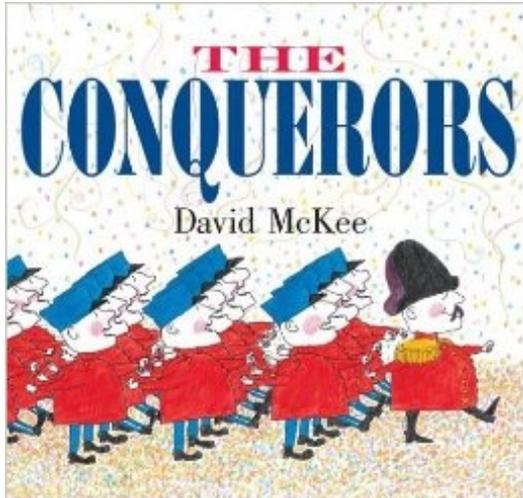
Saint John's letter begins by referring to the community as *Beloved*, a salutation that was common for him to use. Throughout this book, Saint John will also address the people as the *children of God*. Both *Beloved* and *children of God* go beyond terms of endearment because they carry with them the obligations to *love God* and *obey God's commandments*. In order to love God and obey God's commandments, one must also be a person dedicated to **peace**.

### Gospel: John 20: 19-31

In this resurrection account, Jesus appears to the disciples with the greeting *Peace be with you*. This time, Thomas is present, and Jesus challenges Thomas's doubt. Jesus wishes for all of his disciples to be at **peace**. When we think about it, Jesus' greeting *peace be with you* is quite a beautiful greeting to offer to a group of people who denied him and ran when things looked desperate. Jesus is true to himself and presents himself as the very definition of **peace**.



children's  
story



*The Conquerors*

Written by David McKee

Illustrated by David McKee

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character  
education  
activity

**"First keep peace with  
yourself, and then you can  
also bring peace to others."  
Thomas à Kempis**

## *The Conquerors*

In this story, a general who rules a large country convinces his people that their "way of life" is the best and that they have an obligation to conquer other nearby nations so that "they can be like us." Eventually, the general and his army come upon one final nation that has not yet been conquered, for they are a **peaceful** people. As the story progresses, this small country does not resist. Instead, they welcome the soldiers, and when new recruits continue to be sent in, they are also welcomed. Soon, the soldiers who return home bring new foods and customs, and the general is oblivious to what has happened from this interaction with this peaceful nation. The book title's irony and the futility of war are evident in this modern fable.

## *Activity: Sharing Peace*

Step One: Invite the students to recall the time during mass when the presider invites them to share a sign of peace. Tell them that they will be doing that with one another as a classroom activity.

Once all the students are standing by their desks, invite them to share with one another the sign of peace as they would at mass.

Begin with the priest's invitation, *Peace be with you*. Then, have them respond by saying *And with your spirit*.

Instruct them to share peace with each and every person in the classroom. Invite them to begin by saying, *Let us share with one another the sign of peace*.

Step Two: Once all the students have shared and received the sign of peace, invite them to make observations about how the activity went. Hopefully they will recognize:

1. That it took a long time to get to everyone (That is, **peace** takes a lot of work and effort).
2. It takes concentration and focus to get to everyone to offer peace; doing so is an investment.
3. Help them recognize that if it takes that much work, focus, and concentration for a small class to work for **peace**, imagine what a huge task it is for countries to do so.

**“We can never obtain  
peace in the outer  
world until we make  
peace with ourselves.”**

Dalai Lama



case study

**Look.  
Feel.  
Know.  
Act.**

## What could you do today?

Dedicate yourself to being a person of **peace**. Using the *Prayer of Saint Francis*, which is printed below in the Closing Prayer segment, determine how you will respond to each of the attributes of a peacemaker. How, Where, When, and among Whom will you strive to bring love, pardon, faith, hope, light, and joy? Also, how will you seek to be the one to give rather than to receive, and who are the people who need you to be understanding, consoling, loving, giving, and forgiving?

## Look Feel Know Act

Hopefully we have learned that for **peace** to become a reality, each person must seek an interior **peace**. This means that people must be at **peace** with themselves and recognize that inner **peace** takes time, focus, and effort. The same is true for **peace** to be a reality at each level of life. **Peace** with yourself will help you strive for **peace** within your family. Once you have achieved peace in your home, you can focus on creating peace in your extended communities, like your school or town. This can then include even larger communities like your country and the world.

It is important for each person to see themselves as citizens of the world and to see others as brothers and sisters. This allows us to focus on the beautiful similarities that we share and the equally beautiful differences that add to the richness of life. As we come to know more about those who seem different from us, we can begin to appreciate the unique beauty God has given to the world. When we do this, we can truly become citizens of the world, and this is a step towards **peace**.



**closing  
tool**

In the story *The Conquerors*, at first it might have seemed like the **peaceful** people were not doing anything to work towards **peace** with the general and his armies. However, they were exerting great effort to make the soldiers their friends, which involves time, energy, focus, and commitment. The **peace** spoken of in the Scriptures selected for this Second Sunday of Easter also reveals that effort, work, and energy are necessary to achieve lasting **peace**.

### **One of the most beloved prayers for peace is the Peace Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi:**

**Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.**

**Where there is hatred, let me sow your love;**

**Where there is injury, pardon;**

**Where there is doubt, faith;**

**Where there there is despair, hope;**

**Where there is darkness, light;**

**Where there is sadness, joy.**

**O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek**

**To be consoled as to console;**

**To be understood as to understand;**

**To be loved as to love;**

**For it is in giving that we receive;**

**It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;**

**It is in dying that we are born to eternal life.**

**Amen.**



**Santa Clara  
University**

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