

22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B

Fr. Samuel Springuel

19 September, 2021

1st Reading Wisdom 2:12,17–20

Responsorial Psalm Psalm 54:3–4,5,6 and 8

2nd Reading James 3:16–4:3

Gospel Mark 9:30–37

A motto is a short word or phrase which epitomizes the person or organization to which it is attached. It may be aspirational, or it may be realistic. It may be chosen deliberately or simply something a person said that others recognize as indisputably theirs. It may refer to some action which they perform consistently, frequently, and/or exceptionally. It may refer to some virtue they regularly exhibit, an attitude they frequently express, or a characteristic that is commonly used to describe them. Whatever it is, the motto is so strongly associated with the person or organization to which it is attached, that it is often enough to simply say the motto for people to know who or what you are talking about: “Just Do It.”: Nike “Because you’re worth it.”: L’Oreal “I only know that I know nothing.”: Socrates “Everything in moderation, including moderation.”: Oscar Wilde “Semper Paratus.”: U.S. Marine Corps “Be prepared.”: The Boy Scouts “Be the change that you wish to see in the world.”: Gandhi “Do or do not, there is no try.”: Yoda “In spite of everything, I still believe that people are really good at heart.”: Anne Frank “We cannot all do great things. But we can do small things with great love.”: Mother Theresa “I have a dream.”: Martin Luther King, Jr.

The motto for the Benedictine Order is “Pax”: Peace. It is peace that should pervade a monastery. It should be palpable to those who come to visit. They should hear it in the corridors, see in the way the monks act, feel it like a blanket settling onto their soul. It is not merely a lack of noise and distractions or even an absence of conflict, rather it is positive good which is shared freely with all.

Peace is not a sedative, something that lulls us to sleep and makes us insensate to the world around us. It teaches us to appreciate what we have, while not eliminating the ability to dream and strive for something better. It asks us to give up our ego, our need for recognition, our desire for power and possessions. It displaces jealousy and self ambition. Peace allows us to recognize both our gifts and our needs. Peace shares these, shares itself, with others. It orients

us towards the other. Peace sees others needs and tries to meet them. It sees others gifts and is thankful for them.

Peace is not born of ignorance, of naiveté. It is the innocence of the child who is secure in their parent's love. It is the knowledge that God wants, and will provide, what is best for us, even when we don't know what that is. It does not expect an untroubled life to be served up on a silver platter. Peace knows that there will be trials, that there will be moments of hardship. It faces that hardship, willingly participates in it, secure in the knowledge that there is something beyond it: the moment of Resurrection after the Crucifixion.

Peace is both gift from God and work of man. It is present because God is here, and is broken when we fail to acknowledge that. Every one of us, monk or guest, contributes to the peace of this place, the "Pax" which marks us as Benedictines. Let us never forget that, never put it aside or take it for granted. Let "Pax" be the true motto of this place. Peace be with you.