

John Ch 14 v 27 and Matthew Ch 28 v 20

'Peace I leave with you; it is my own peace that I give you'. These words are so familiar to us all; words that bring us comfort; words that calm our fears; words that led those first disciples forward to a time when they would see Jesus no more. They have given comfort to many, many people through the centuries and are still repeated in our cathedrals, churches and places of worship today. Throughout the land this Easter time Christians have sung, said or listened to these words over and over again and oh, how we have prayed that there was peace in the world. We know the peace Jesus gives is a deeper and very different peace than just the absence of war, not only war in Ukraine, although that is very much upper most in our thoughts, but the absence of all wars. There have been so many; wars in Syria, The Falklands, The 1st and 2nd World wars to name but a few.

Have we learnt anything throughout the centuries?

We see on our television screens the many thousands of people fleeing from Ukraine, leaving their homes and belongings and escaping from their war torn land, carrying their personal belongings with them. They become refugees heading where? They know not only looking for a safer, better place to live. In the Old Testament there are many similar stories of people moving from one place to another and making new homes in foreign lands. How can we convey the words 'I will be with you always' to the Ukrainian people whose lives seem in turmoil and who can see no hope for the future? But look closely in the Old Testament, there are comforting words from God: 'I know the plans I have for you' said God to Jeremiah and the people of Israel. God knows what he is doing and he will never abandon his people be they Israelites or Ukrainians. As we have celebrated Easter once more, we remember the hope that God sent into the world. In Jesus' resurrection we remember that 'Jesus is with us always even in the horrors of Ukraine and other war-torn places. We pray that there will soon be a peaceful end to all wars; that those in leadership roles and positions of power will receive God's peace and that love and respect for fellow human beings will win over feelings of greed, hatred and prejudice. The many acts of kindness shown to the Ukraine refugees give us that hope. We pray that God has positive plans for refugees from all countries and that they may be able to make a new life for themselves in a new land or if they can that they may return safely to continue peacefully living in their home land.

For Discussion

Discuss the plight of refugees in the present situation.