

***You are not alone*** (Rev 21:10-14,22-23; Joh 14:23-29)

\* Today there is no need to be a traveler in order to discover the diversity or beauty of this world; just turn on your computer and travel with *Google Earth* all around the world. With reference to this, the remarkable pictures of the Grand Canyon suddenly flashed back from my memory. After that, with a one click I passed over the Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea, from one coast to another, until my eye landed on the Judean Wilderness centered round the Dead Sea. This place was remembered in connection with Jesus' temptations by the devil. Then I launched out on a small island Patmos in the Aegean Sea where the Apostle John was held as a prisoner by the Emperor Domitian. After watching the panorama of the volcanic island, the town on it, and the neighboring sea, I got home to a nice warm house, again with one click. Therefore, I consider such way of travelling as very convenient. First, because it was over within less than no time, second, because I avoided the things that might have troubled or scared me, and third, because I learned the historical places. In short, it was a nice and peaceful journey.

\* Now, if we take into consideration the Christian preferences, then the peaceful state of heart and mind seems to be at most desirable. Surely, in such a state there is no room for trouble and fear of any kind, but rather a clear vision and understanding of many things. If a man has ever experienced God's peace, he could not remain indifferent for long and look for this treasure again. And more than this, he would understand the difference between peace that is coming from God, and another – from this world. This idea is proven by words of our Lord Jesus as he said, *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you,* (Joh 14:27).

\* Friends, it shouldn't surprise you that the culture around us cannot understand the nature and the character of Jesus' peace for several reasons. First, God doesn't give his peace to the unrepentant sinners. This idea originates from John's account. At the moment of Judas' departure and for the next 5 chapters of the Gospel, Jesus' words were addressed exclusively to the eleven; they represent the imagery of the faithful disciples from all ages. Where Jesus says that my peace I give to you, it doesn't include Judas-betrayal who with common sense also can be seen as a prototype of people, but the evil, who are not given. Second reason why people cannot understand Jesus' peace is originated from the idea that this peace is substantial part of the spiritual world. It cannot be conceived by means of intellectual observation except through the active process of one's involvement, pretty well like love.

\* Now, after setting all the pros and cons in a proper place, let's bow our heads before God in a prayer. Dear Father, we greatly thank You for the knowledge and experience Your kingdom gives us through Jesus

Christ Your Son and our Lord. By the mighty deeds You established this kingdom in us and gave us to believe that these deeds are Yours. Thanks for Your peace and love. Also grant us to be Your chosen temple that is all earthly temples excelling; and in the end, dwell us in the Holy City, the most desirable place, forever. Amen

\* The lectionary for today offers the readings from Revelation - (21:10-14,22-23), and from John - (14:23-29); both readings were written by St. John, the eyewitness. We know that John belongs to the first community of believers, and at the end of his long-time ministry, he had the apocalyptic visions. Once he was carried in spirit and brought to at most great and High Mountain. There he had seen the bride of the Lamb that is the Church of Christ coming down out of Heaven. He described the glorious Church in figurative language as the beautiful and bright Holy City, Jerusalem, (v.10).

\* In connection with John's vision, I've suddenly remembered Jesus' vision described by the Synoptic Gospels. They say that the devil brought Jesus to a very high mountain and shown him the great cities and their kingdoms. From this account we learned that the devil wants to be worshiped, and in exchange he promises his power and money. The devil promised all the treasures of the world if Jesus worshiped him, (Matt 4:9).

\* Friends, in view of the bright and glorious City Jerusalem, can you worship anyone else except the Holy and Blessed Trinity? Can God's glory be comparable with what the world offers us, even all its beauties? Of course, the Heavenly brightness and glory are much more valuable than gold, silver, and authority.

\* Now, I call your attention to the lesson from John's Gospel. It may be summarized as the response to a common question given by Jesus to all Christians. The question is this, Lord, *how is it that you will be seen openly "in our behalf", and not be seen by the world?* (v.22). Significantly, the very picture of God working on behalf of those who believe in Him was recently provided by the media.

\* According to the information from the TODAYshow.com, on April 14, a volunteer James King working on his own rescued a fifth-grade girl, Nadia Bloom. She had been lost for five days in the Florida swamps known as the Everglades wilderness. On April 13 James had been with a group of volunteer searchers. They had not found the girl on that day. So the team was planning to go out later on the next day. But at night James' wife said, 'You know, James, when we lose something, and we pray in the spirit, we always find it,' "I said, 'You're right.'"

\* The story of God's manifestation began on the next day when early in the morning James took his GPS, two cell phones, a Bible, a machete, water, trail mix, and a nutrition drink. Then he set his foot forward where the Spirit led him, as he said, "The Lord told me to follow where the sunrise was, so I went directly east — as much as you can go direct in a swamp." "... .. I went in and the Lord led me directly to her." It took about two

hours of hacking his way through dense swamp with a machete to get to Nadia. While walking, he was praying and talking to the Lord, and the Lord directed him. Then one time he said, 'Nadia?' and he heard word, 'What?' " Nadia was only about 40 yards away.

\* After hearing what Jesus has done through his servant James King, my heart was filled with words of thanks. Thanks to Jesus for giving us today the sign of his presence among people who love him, and through whom he glorified his name. Friends, the words of Jesus are fulfilled each time when his peace dwells in our trembling hearts. Now try to imagine yourselves in a place of Nadia's parents. Wouldn't each of us be frightened out of our mind after hearing word that our child is missing? When Nadia's father received the good news, he was asked how he felt, and he said: "I can't even describe it. Let's give the glory to God." Friends, see, nobody can describe God's peace as I told you before, even by those who have experienced it!

\* Today we've heard the word of Jesus as he said, *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid,* (Joh 14:27).

These words are not an empty declaration; they are experienced for the sake of remembering God's dwelling among us and in us. *If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him,* (14:23). If we are doing so, the peace of God, which passes all understanding will be experienced and appreciated above all the treasures of this world.

Beloved, keep the words of life and may peace be with you always.

Amen.