

## Striving for Peace

When I would ask my mother what she wanted for Christmas, or her birthday or for Mother's Day, the answer almost always was, "Peace and Quiet." Having raised three daughters, I fully understand what she meant. She was striving to have a center of peace in her life—a place to which she could retreat when things got a little out of hand.

I was reminded of this when I flew back to Milwaukee last Tuesday for my aunt's memorial service. All was going well as I traveled, until I got to Cincinnati and waited for my connecting flight. We were supposed to leave at 4:05 and arrive in Milwaukee at 4:30 Central Time. This would be ideal for me and my plans. Well, as Robert Burns once said, "The best laid plans o' mice and men (women, too) gang aft a-gley." They certainly did.

First, the plane that had left Cincinnati to go to Chicago and that would return to carry us to Milwaukee, was delayed by weather and air traffic controllers in the very Windy City. The delay was over two hours. The young woman at the desk, Erica, informed us of this and everyone understood. She told us when the plane had finally made its way back to Cincy and had landed and mentioned that we would be boarding as soon as the plane was turned around. Uh huh.

About an hour later, she announced that the pilots had noticed the plane had a flat tire, probably a good thing, and maintenance would be coming to check on it. Uh huh.

About half an hour later, we were told that Comair, which operates the flight, was the only group that uses Michelin tires and they were not sure one was to be found. Well, O.K.....

About half an hour later, we were told that a tire had been found and ordered but that there was no Comair crew around to change the tire. The available crews were working on two other planes ahead of us. Fifteen minutes after this announcement, a Comair van was spotted by some eagle-eyed passengers on the tarmac and a fellow in a yellow jumpsuit came up through the jetway and was heard to say, "I can change it." Alleluia!! And he did and we boarded the plane only 5 hours later than expected. People were a tad edgy. We obediently fastened our seatbelts and prepared to take off when the pilot announced that, since it had been snowing, we needed to be de-iced—no problem there—better to be safe than sorry. He added that we would have to wait another 45 minutes for our turn. So we headed for Milwaukee about 6 hours after we were due to leave. I wrote to

a few of you that this was a “Long Day's Journey into Night.” Since this flight I have received several apologies from the offending airline.

Surprisingly, while there was a bit of grumbling, no one, and I mean no one, got nasty or lost their cool. The flight attendant, expecting the worst couldn't believe it. I couldn't believe it, although I have a great deal of faith in my fellow humans. I kind of hoped that in this season of Advent people had leveled their pathways, made crooked ways straight and were striving for peace rather than battle. Either that, or, we were just too beaten down to resist.

I think that we all knew there was absolutely nothing we could accomplish by going crazy. That it was a far better thing to “do unto others” as we would like to be done unto and to seek a peaceful center that would remain undisturbed by the difficult ripples of life that were washing over all of us. As in most situations like this one, a sense of comradery developed and we actually spoke to one another.

We knew, as did the nation Israel that this too, would pass and we would live through it. That was the promise expressed by the prophet Isaiah.

A promise that might have echoed in the minds and hearts of those who read Peter's Second Letter. A letter that helped them understand that while they might have to face turmoil and persecution, they were to strive for peace to keep themselves united and strong while they waited for the return of Christ.

We keep ourselves strong when we are able to have patience with life and all it deals us and when we strive for peace rather than warfare with those around us. During this Advent season we are reminded of the importance of peace in our lives. We are to understand that the best of things come to those who carry on with hope and peace and joy and love. We are best off when we learn how to act in life rather than to react to it and when we can handle situations that are difficult without allowing them to get a grip on us and bend us all out of shape.

Striving for peace is a good and holy way to live all of life. We need to all hope that God will make us instruments of God's peace and that we will discover a way to share this great gift with all we encounter.

Amen