

The 2003 movie *Lost in Translation* is a comedy-drama starring Bill Murray. The plot revolves around an aging actor who arrives in Tokyo to film a television commercial for a Japanese company. Throughout the film, many things are lost in translation - as the director gives long, drawn out, and impassioned directions in Japanese ... which the translator renders in brief incomplete English sentences.

The film explores themes of loneliness, insomnia, existential ennui, and culture shock against the backdrop of a modern Japanese city; and was nominated for four Academy Awards, including Best Picture, Best Actor, and Best Director; winning the award for Best Original Screenplay.

In today's readings, we hear a recurring theme - which can get 'lost in translation.'

In the First Reading, the Lord God says through the Prophet Isaiah:

Lo, I will spread prosperity over Jerusalem like a river.

Yet the word rendered here in English as *prosperity* is the Hebrew word *shalom* which is often translated as *peace*.

In the Second Reading, St. Paul speaks of boasting in nothing but

*the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,
through which the world has been crucified to [him],
and [he] to the world.*

And admonishes his readers that "*all who follow this rule*" will receive "*Peace and mercy*".

And in the Gospel, the seventy-two disciples are instructed to go out and preach that "*The kingdom of God is at hand*". And when they enter a house to say, "*Peace to this household.*"

Being early 21st century Americans, the word *peace* carries all sorts of connotations. We have "peace protestors," "peace talks," "peace treaties," "peace-signs," and "peace-niks."

And this understanding reflects a distinctly Western view of *peace* in that in the Roman world, the Latin word *pax* means ‘peace,’ but also means a ‘truce’ or a ‘treaty.’

St. Paul’s letter was written in Greek, and the Greek word *eirene*, means *peace*, but also means peace of mind, unity, quiet, and rest. And remember, St. Paul was from the middle-east, and most likely spoke Aramaic and Hebrew before he knew Greek.

And in Isaiah, we hear the word “*shalom*” rendered as ‘prosperity.’ And indeed, in Hebrew, the word *shalom* means peace, prosperity, completeness, soundness, welfare. In Modern Hebrew, it means, as well, to be paid in full.

And so, we can reflect on the many layers of “peace” that weave the tapestry of today’s readings. Most especially the Gospel verse for today which is usually sandwiched between the Alleluia’s:

*Let the peace of Christ [rule in] your hearts;
let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.*

And so, with all of this moving between Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, Latin, and English - a full appreciation of just what is meant by “*peace*” and “*prosperity*” can quite easily get lost in translation.

But let us take that last line from the Gospel verse as our homework.

As we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, may we receive the graces we need so that the “*peace of Christ*” may truly rule in our “*hearts.*” And the “*word of Christ dwell in [us] richly.*”