

## *Easter 3B 2015*

### *Peace Be with You*

During these weeks after Easter, the church draws our attention to the many ways the risen Lord appeared to his disciples after his resurrection. If you listened carefully to today's gospel, you noticed that the first greeting of the risen Christ to his disciples—and to us—is peace: Peace be with you! The peace that the risen Lord gives is a gift from God. It is the peace that God bestows upon those who believe in Christ. It is not something we can give ourselves. It is a gracious gift of God: reconciliation with God and with each other in Christ.

I have met lots of people who are in need of the kind of peace that only the risen Christ can bring. I have met people who are not at peace with themselves because they refuse to accept the grace God freely bestows in Christ. I have met families who are not at peace: children at odds with their parents, parents at odds with each other. For whatever reason, the peace of Christ does not dwell in their homes.

The world in which we live is a divided world desperately in need of peace. The communities in which we live are often divided by hostilities of class and race. The church itself is not exempt from these divisions and so finds itself in need of that peace its Lord bestowed upon it. While it is not easy to solve these conflicts that separate and divide us, one thing is clear. We are in need of peace and

reconciliation, both within ourselves and among ourselves. More importantly, the peace we need is not a peace we can bestow upon ourselves. The only peace that can heal us is the peace that comes from God—the peace that the risen Lord bestows upon us.

Consider for a moment the many ways in which the Mass speaks of peace. In the Gloria, we say, “and on earth peace to people of good will.” In the Eucharistic prayer, we pray “may this sacrifice of our reconciliation advance the peace of all the world.” After the Lord’s Prayer, we pray, “Lord Jesus Christ, who said to your apostles, Peace I leave you, peace I give you, look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church, and graciously grant her peace and unity in accordance with your will.” Immediately before receiving communion we offer each other the sign of peace. This sign of peace is not a mere handshake; it is a profound gesture in which we offer to each other what we cannot give by our own power—the gift of God’s own peace.

When the risen Lord says “Peace be with you!” he gives us the fullness of God’s own peace, a peace that the world cannot give, a peace we cannot give to each other, a peace that is God’s supreme gift. Are you at peace with yourself today? Is your family at peace today? If not, it is time to return to risen Lord and receive anew the gift of salvation: the peace of Christ that the world cannot give.