

Homily for the 3rd Sunday of Easter

April 14-15, 2018

Readings: Acts 3:13-15, 17-19; 1 John 2:1-5a; Luke 24:35-48

Preacher: Sheryl Zabel

Today's gospel from Luke tells of the risen Jesus joining his disciples in Jerusalem, after meeting with two of them on the road to Emmaus.

"Peace be with you," he said. Their reaction was anything but peaceful—Luke describes them as being "terrified." But their fear did turn to amazement and joy, and they begin to feel the "peace" that Jesus had brought to them.

We know that this peace from Jesus is meant for all humanity—and it's not just a nice feeling, but a profound inner peace. We have this peace when we recognize that we are not alone and that death is not the end. It is the peace that we wish for one another when we gather together for worship. It is the peace that remains with us regardless of what is going on in our lives and in the world. This peace, which comes from God, truly fosters life.

Peace brings with it a mission—to transform the world. We humans constantly see our fellow human beings as threats and as enemies—as the "other." But our faith tells us that we are one, that all creation is one.

And science confirms this. The April 2018 issue of *National Geographic* has several articles devoted to the concept of race. "Skin Deep," for instance, begins by stating that "Science tells us there is no genetic or scientific basis for [race]. Instead it's largely a made-up label, used to define and separate us." Does God want us to be separated? Does God want the oppression and violence that has grown out of racism? Of course not.

Science has also confirmed that all life is one. Yet too often we treat our fellow beings on this planet and the rich resources of the earth as stuff to be consumed as quickly as possible to meet our short-term needs. That is not living in peace.

So how can we live as an Easter people, as people filled with God's joy and God's peace? One way is to stop seeing people as the "other," as somehow separated from us. We can begin to do this by listening to our family members, co-workers, friends and fellow parishioners, even when we disagree about something, especially when we disagree. This is a crucial first step, but it is not the end. For we all came from God, and we all are called to do Jesus' work on earth. And that means accepting, each and every day, God's wonderful gift of peace.