

## THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER – YEAR B

Acts 3:13-15, 17-19; 1 Jn. 2:1-5; Lk. 24:35-48  
*Excerpts from Pope Francis – Angelus – 15 April 2018*  
by Father Charles Fillion  
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Brothers and sisters, some of you might think that we heard the same Gospel last Sunday. Last Sunday, it was the Gospel of **John**. Today, it is the Gospel according to **Luke**. Yes, it is the same story, and we are still Easter Sunday, the day that Jesus rose from the dead. Jesus is not a spirit, a ghost. It is **his** real presence with **his** risen body. He is a **man** with body and soul. And since this did not seem enough, the Gospel says something interesting: there was so much joy that this joy prevented them from believing it: ‘No, it cannot be! So much joy is not possible!’. And Jesus, in order to convince them, asks them: “Have you anything here to eat?”. They offer him some broiled fish; Jesus takes and eats it in front of them.

Jesus’ insistence on the reality of his Resurrection clarifies the Christian perspective of the body: the body is not an obstacle nor a prison of the soul. The body is created by God, and humankind is not complete if there is no union of body and soul. Jesus, who has triumphed over death and risen in body and soul, helps us to understand that we must have a positive idea of our body. Yes, it can become an occasion or instrument of sin, but sin is not provoked by the body, but rather by our moral weakness. The body is a wondrous gift from God, intended, in union with the soul, to express in fullness the image and likeness of Him. Therefore, we are called to have great respect and care for **our** body **and** that of others.

Any offense or wound or violence to the body of our neighbour is an affront to God the Creator! Our thoughts **go** to the children, the women, the elderly who are physically abused. In the flesh of these people, we find the Body of Christ. Christ wounded, mocked, slandered, humiliated, scourged, crucified... Jesus taught us love. A love that, in his Resurrection, is demonstrated to be more powerful than sin and death. Today’s Gospel passage calls us to be people capable of looking deeply, full of wonder and great joy at having encountered the Risen Lord. It calls us to be people who know how to receive and appreciate the novelty of life that He sows in history, to direct it toward a new heaven and a new earth.

**Last** Sunday, I focused on the verb “to see”. The disciples **saw** the Lord, they **saw** his wounds. Today, Jesus manifests himself to the Apostles, addressing this greeting to them: “Peace be to you” (Lk 24:36). Peace is linked to the mystery of Christ and the proclamation of salvation. Christ’s work is a work of peace. Thanks to Christ, we are children of the same Father, members of a companionship founded on the Eldest Brother. It’s so important that we make this gesture before receiving Jesus in the Eucharist.

*The aim is to demonstrate peace, communion, and charity, before receiving the Most Holy Eucharist (Redemptionis Sacramentum #71).* Why is it important? It is a matter of both inner peace and the peace that is established in interpersonal relationships. The Church implores peace and unity for herself and the whole human family, and the faithful express their communion in the Church and their love for one another before receiving the sacrament.

However, many seem to have forgotten **how** to make this gesture. Here's what comes from the Bishops of Canada: "The sign of peace is given by shaking hands or a bow. However, it is appropriate that each person offer the sign of peace **ONLY** to those who are nearest to us and in a sober manner."

During the pandemic, Archbishop LeGatt invited us to make a sober gesture but also without human contact. He asked us to put our hands together, bow our heads and say the words: "The peace of Christ." Again, the sign of peace is given **ONLY** to those who are nearest to us. Even though the pandemic seems to be a thing of the past, do not force people to shake hands. Be respectful of others, as all other actions and words diminish, if not voids, the sign of peace. It's not a time to say "Hi" and waving our hands to everyone. All other gestures are not acceptable.

The priest says: "Let us offer each other the sign of peace". It's not the gesture that's at stake here, but the source of the gesture, Christ, Prince of Peace, model of charity. Received from Christ, who presides over the assembly, it is from the altar that the peace is spread throughout the assembly. Our ways of doing things have often interfered with the perception of this origin. The gesture starts at the altar, and then is transmitted like a ray of light. In this gesture, we share what we are called to become: peacemakers.

At the end of Mass, after the blessing, we are sent out in peace: "Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life". We respond, "Thanks be to God". Together, we confess our understanding that Christ invites us to become "faces" of his peace for the world. By the Rite of Peace, we offer peace and unity for each other, the Church and for the whole human family. To offer the gesture of peace in truth, in the charity of Christ, is to learn how to truly give peace to the world.