

THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER (4/25-26/2009)

Acts of Apostles 3/13-19, Psalm 4, 1 John 2/1-5, Luke 24/35-48

One of Jesus' favorite post-resurrection lines was: *"Peace be with you."*

I suspect that one reason he had to say it so often for his disciples' benefit was that, every time he showed up among them, they got very agitated.

They were simply not accustomed to seeing and communicating with someone who had risen from the dead.

But there may well have been a second reason for his "peace" greeting as well

The word Jesus would have used would have been "shalom".

The peace he was offering them was God's great gift to the world.

What is it that we need in this world of ours at this time?

Would you say that we need to feel at one with God's creation all around us?

Think of that for a moment.

How many times in the bible does the Lord say, either through His messengers the angels, or directly, "Don't be afraid"?

How many times does Jesus say not to worry?

How often do the Scriptures encourage us to accept God's presence – and trust it?

We so often lack peace; we lack a peaceful outlook in our lives.

Worry and fretting consume us, especially when something starts to go wrong.

It seems easy to lose the peaceful gift of God – especially in these difficult times.

Anyone can take it away from us just by the way they interact with us.

Some years ago, I was trying to maneuver my car onto Lake Shore Drive during rush hour..

There was a taxi behind me driven by a very impatient cabbie who was letting me know what he thought of my cautious efforts to enter that traffic pattern. I was holding him up.

When we finally sped on to the Drive, he made sure to pass me up, give me the bird, and let out a string of oaths that put me in my place.

I was livid, and found myself wanting to speed after him and return in kind.

Fortunately, I had to make a quick turn to head south to 31st St. as he continued north.

A moment later, it hit me how angry I was, all because of this man's impatience.

He had taken over my state of mind, and was ruining my afternoon.

It took me several minutes to get myself back under control

That's why I think Jesus' gift of peace is so important; it permits us to be in touch with the calmness of God's presence, with what really counts in this world, with the best possible options for our lives.

"Peace be with you."

Thank you Jesus, not only for the reminder, but for the reality you give us from your Father and the Spirit and yourself.