

**Catholic Church of the Beatitudes
Santa Barbara, CA**

Homily for the Third Sunday of Easter (Year B) – April 19, 2015

“Show Me!”

Based on “Jesus the Advocate” by Mary McGlone

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

I would like to start this reflection by recalling the first letter of John – our second reading. This was not the same John whose gospel we have been hearing lately, but this writer certainly was a deep thinker and a caring minister, trying to keep his early Christian community on track and free from hypocrisy.

When John writes that “We have an *advocate* with Abba-God,” what is he really telling us? That the reign of God is like a courtroom where we are lucky enough to have sweet Jesus as our defense lawyer? Having already paid our fine, will he get the divine judge to let us off easy? That’s a rough description of *one* widely held understanding of this reading—and a related general theory of salvation. But is it the *only* interpretation?

The original Greek word translated here as “advocate” was “paraclete,” which can also be translated as *comforter, consoler, intercessor, teacher* and so on. Let’s think about those kinder, less adversarial translations for a moment. And let’s recall how gently Jesus behaved when he made his post-resurrection appearances.

While the disciples were trying to sift through the strange experiences narrated by their trusted companions, while they were questioning the women’s tales and wondering about ghosts, the risen Christ became present among them, offering “*Shalom, Peace.*” Then, facing head-on everything that terrified them — from their own dreadful guilt and shame to the very real risk of persecution by the temple authorities — he simply and gently said,

“Look at my hands and feet ... *touch* me.” In effect, he was saying, “Look! I am the one you denied and left to suffer alone, and all I want now is to be with you and give you my peace.”

Christ offered more than just “Words, words, words!” There was both a message and a messenger. He was someone *tangible* with a *living* message.

While all analogies limp, the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus call to my musical mind a lyric from *My Fair Lady*, where Liza Dolittle is at her wit’s end with the “words, words, words” of her wimpy suitor, Freddy. She wants a *tangible* demonstration of *real* love! So she blurts out, in her doubting-Thomas way, some marvelously memorable lines that are soooooo human: (*Let’s all say “show me” together, on cue!*)

Don’t talk of stars, burning above;
If you’re in love, *show me!*
Tell me no dreams filled with desire.
If you’re on fire, *show me!*
Here we are together in the middle of the night!
Don’t talk of spring! Just hold me tight!
Anyone who’s ever been in love’ll tell you that
This is no time for a chat!

Sing me no song! Read me no rhyme!
Don’t waste my time, *show me!*
Don’t talk of June, don’t talk of fall!
Don’t talk at all! *Show me!*
Never do I ever want to hear another word!
There isn’t one I haven’t heard.
Here we are together in what ought to be a
dream;

Say one more word and I'll scream!

Haven't your arms hungered for mine?
Please don't "expl'ine," show me! *Show me!*
Don't wait until wrinkles and lines
pop out all over my brow,
Show . . . me . . . now!

When the disciples stood before the risen Christ, who was *showing* them *peace* and *tangible* reconciliation, the meaning of his message finally came clear to them. Every concept of God the harsh judge disappeared as he pronounced that one word: "Peace."

With that word alone, the disciples could truly recognize the resurrected Jesus as the *comforter*. But their perspective had taken a 180-degree turn. Jesus was no longer the one who would plead for them before a stern God, but the one a loving *God* sent to plead *with* them! This interpretation is very much in line with process theology, which speaks of a God operating through *persuasion* rather than coercion or heavy-handedness.

Looking at today's Gospel, which retells the final verses from Luke, we hear of quite a few disciples hiding in fear; the Emmaus travelers have just begun to describe what they experienced. Before they can get their whole story out, Jesus is standing in their midst, offering them peace.

We should remember that the crucifixion had overpowered the disciples' faith and undermined their faithfulness. It is for that reason that Jesus' greeting of "Peace" was so meaningful.

While they were worrying and wondering what the various reports of the Resurrection might mean, Jesus came to them and stood in their midst, seeking reconciliation. We need to

underline that easily missed detail: It was Jesus—not his fragile, fearful disciples—who sought reconciliation.

Jesus' approach, his coming into their presence, summarizes the utterly astounding meaning of his life, death and resurrection. This is the ultimate revelation about the Father who sent Jesus into the world.

The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, even the God of poor, frightened Adam and Eve who hid in shame, is the instigator of reconciliation, the eternal seeker of communion with humanity. That is the astounding good news that Jesus preached by example—by the living parable of his life.

Throughout his ministry, Jesus had taught his disciples; he had reprimanded their status-seeking and dismissed their urges to vengeance; he had proclaimed God's preferential option for the poor and affirmed the necessity of his suffering, but they couldn't comprehend it.

Now, when they were at their absolute worst, he came offering *peace*. Those appearances opened their minds, enabling them to understand the scriptures in a new way. Having met the risen Lord and having accepted his offer of peace, they were finally getting enabled to go forth as witnesses to all the nations.

As I close, I want to invite us to think about when and how someone special in our lives came to us and *showed* us—*demonstrated* to us—what God's peace and reconciliation looks like.

Was it in the trusting gaze of a child? Or an elderly person? Was it a kiss of peace in Church? Or a laying on of hands?

Where and when have we felt such complete acceptance?