

Easter 3B

April 15, 2018

Rev. Ken Wratten at St. Luke's

Acts 3:12-19 Peter addresses the people about their causing the death of the author of life

1 John 3:1-7 See what love the Father has given us: that we should be called children of God.

Luke 24:36b-48 Jesus said for the disciples to touch and see; he is not a ghost.

The Scripture lessons today describe more than one **transformation that began with the resurrection** of Jesus. Jesus proved that his resurrection was no illusion; his appearance was not in some ghostly form; he was physically present and alive. But John's account of this meeting tells us that while Jesus proved his physical presence to Thomas and the others, he got into the room through locked doors!

Before the passage we heard today in Luke, Jesus had been walking with two men on the road to Emmaus; he ate with them, and then vanished. The next sentence records Jesus reappearing among his disciples in Jerusalem. **Jesus had definitely been transformed** – changed from the inside out.

The book of Acts tells us how the transformation of Jesus brought about **the transformation of Peter**. After Peter saw that Jesus was raised from the dead, and after he experienced the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, he healed a crippled beggar. Lots of people witnessed this healing; they recognized the man who was now walking and jumping and praising God. Peter told them that this power to heal was not **his** power, but it came from Jesus. Peter had changed from the inside out; from the impetuous student to a messenger and healer; filled with power, confidence, boldness, and words that carried authority and truth.

There was a power that emanated from the resurrection of Jesus. And it still does.

In that room Jesus opened the disciples' minds to understand the Scriptures. Have you experienced that in your life? As a young boy I remember having a Bible in the house, but nobody ever read from it. I went to Sunday School and Youth Group, but only read what was assigned. But a day came that I hungered for what it said. I couldn't put it down. I had this Living Bible at home, a dramatized Bible on cassette in my car, and one of these pocket sized Bibles in my briefcase. I felt like a sponge, soaking up the message behind the stories. I felt transformed. **We the church are about transformed lives (of ourselves and others).**

Paul said, "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." (Romans 12:2)

Think of transformations you and I have experienced. Witnessing ordinations to the diaconate and priesthood that started here at St Luke's and at my previous parish. Dee Sigismond's passion for the children at Chamberlains, and her work there that is helping the children know that we care about them. We hope our love transforms them. The nurturing, teaching, and religious instruction of 35 or so

children each year in our preschool (palpable transformation). Every person who plays an instrument or sings, serves on Sunday, teaches Sunday School, works on a parish committee, or studies in a Bible study group. Our doing these things changes us. **The resurrection of Jesus changes us; even today.**

1 John explains that through faith in Jesus Christ **we are all welcomed as God's children**; not just as created beings; not just as subjects to worship Him; but as God's beloved children. Who we are is God's family. Who we are becoming is **reflections of God**, by learning to live by the values Jesus lived by; to be like him; to have the mind of Christ at work in us.

Today there are 2.2 billion people in the world who follow the teachings of Jesus. For the 2.2 billion, I get excited to think what the impact would be if all of us allowed ourselves **to be transformed** by Jesus; to be made new from the inside out. **To be changed we need to ask** for and accept this power. It can be as easy as looking in the mirror in the morning, or spending one extra minute sitting quietly in your car when you arrive at work, and saying, "Lord, today, as best as I know how, I give today to you: what I do, what I say, the challenges I face, and my response to the people I meet today, I give myself to you.

To help me meet local clergy I joined a monthly coffee. I started talking about meeting the needs of the homeless who come to our churches. I was asked by these clergy to give the message (homily) at the ecumenical service on Good Friday; I talked about our shared calling. I've been asked to serve on the Board of the Community Food Bank. **Coincidence??** I want to integrate the outreach work of our churches so we work together instead of each doing our own thing to help the people who can't afford healthy meals. My vision is for Christ's church to provide networking alongside community service organizations. I believe God brought these experiences together; transformation through the renewing of our minds.

We are an Easter people. Our faith is empowered by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. **He received new life** on Easter Day; and as 'Easter people' we believe in **new life for ourselves**. We believe in personal transformation from the inside out.

May each of us accept what Jesus gave his life for, and allow that power to be at work more and more in our lives. Amen.