

III EASTER 2016

SERMON – SAINT JOSEPH PARISH

FATHER CRAIG LOONEY

1 ST PETER 2.11 ST. JOHN 16.16

✠

How do we tell our friends we are leaving and won't be seeing them for a long time? Even in an age when cell phones and email make instant communication with friends and family easy...across the country or across the world...we want them close to us...because we love them.

Saying good-bye to family and friends is never easy. Jesus knew his disciples were not going to want to hear what he had to say...that he was going away...and it might be a very long time before they see him again.

The end of Jesus' public ministry was the Transfiguration. For the remainder of his time on earth Jesus talks with his disciples about his leaving them. He tells them not to worry...they will see him again...in a little while.

Peter, James and John witnessed the Transfiguration first hand and they wanted to hold on to what they were seeing. But this is the moment Jesus accepts the hard task ahead...whatever the personal cost...to redeem all of humanity...to set things right between God and us.

Jesus sets the stage for his departure...his death...and his return on Easter...at the Last Supper. It is a long conversation Jesus has with his disciples and it is intended to give them hope...but they don't understand what he is talking about.

Jesus talks about a "little while" when he will not be seen...and then another "little while" when he will be seen. The disciples don't get it..."What does all this talk about a 'little while' mean? We don't get any of this."

What Jesus says next confuses them even more...his going away is like a mother about to give birth to her child...the painful experience of childbirth is quickly forgotten when she holds her newborn baby in her arms. The disciples don't get this either.

The point Jesus is trying to make is one we need to hear. Jesus tries to reassure his disciples they will be sad when they see him killed...uncertain of what is going to happen

next. But they will quickly forget their sadness when they see him again Easter morning. He will be with them for a little while longer...then he will go back to his Father in heaven...and even though he may be separated from them for a while...they will see him again...and this time the joy they will have will never be taken away.

For the past two thousand years we have been in the period of waiting for Jesus to return...our own "little while". We want that "little while" to come to an end...we want Jesus to return...in the very last verses of Revelation we say so..."Jesus...hurry up and come back."

God has a timetable...Jesus will return at the right time and at the right moment...and our sadness will be turned to joy beyond our comprehension. It is a waste of time to try to figure out when our "little while" of waiting will end. What we must do is make the best use of this time of waiting by paying attention to what Saint Peter tells us we should be doing...God's will...by loving each other and by doing good works.

Our time of waiting should be a dynamic time of spreading the Good News about Jesus. This should be a happy time...going about our daily lives...accomplishing our tasks...loving God and loving others.

And we get strength from knowing we are not alone...Jesus is present in the Words of Scripture...in the Eucharist...in our lives together...in the Community called Saint Joseph Parish.

Jesus promises us when he returns he will take all who believe in him to heaven. We will see him and our friends and loved ones again. We will live forever in the presence of God the Father. We will never have to say good-bye...to anyone...ever again!

While we are still in the Easter Season today's Gospel is intended to help us get ready for Jesus' departure on Ascension Day. Jesus tells us not to worry...he will return. We don't know when that will happen.

When Jesus comes back...we will have peace and joy and happiness beyond anything we can imagine...never to be taken away.

✠