

### III EASTER 2017

#### SERMON – SAINT JOSEPH PARISH

FATHER CRAIG LOONEY

*1 ST PETER 2.11 ST. JOHN 16.16*

✠

“Good-bye and good luck”...something we often say to someone we don’t expect to see again for a very long time...or perhaps ever again.

“Good-bye” was originally expressed “God be with you”. The “good luck” part is intended to make the separation from friends and family less painful. Sometimes we have to say “good-bye” to people in the Parish who have moved away. We hope we will see them again.

The Sunday Gospel readings from now until Pentecost all come from the long “good-bye” speech Jesus gave to the disciples at the Last Supper. Jesus told his friends he was getting ready to leave them for a “little while”...and then they would see him again for a “little while”...and then he would go away again...this time back to the Father.

The disciples were confused by what Jesus said about leaving them...“What’s all this talk about going away for a little while and then coming back and then going away again. We don’t know what he’s talking about!”

Jesus is trying to get his friends ready for what was about to happen next...his arrest, trial and execution, thanks to Judas Iscariot who was on his way to get the police. On Good Friday the disciples would witness their friend’s death...and experience sadness they thought would never end. But their sadness would not last forever...it would get replaced by overwhelming joy on Easter morning.

Neither could the disciples understand the full meaning of the story Jesus tells about a woman in labor...how the pain she endures is quickly forgotten when the baby is born: with the new birth comes new life. Jesus’ death made his friends sad...for a little while. But their sadness would quickly be forgotten when they saw him again Easter morning...Resurrection brings New Life!

After the Resurrection, Jesus walked and talked with his friends...it must have seemed like old times. They were happy to have him back...they didn’t want him leave...they did not want to say good-bye.

But Jesus had to get them ready for his next departure...at the Ascension. Witnessed by his closest friends, Peter, James and John, angels told them Jesus would return some day just like they saw him go up...surrounded by white clouds and bright light.

Jesus promised his disciples they would see him again in a little while. He also told them they would not be left alone...when he went back to heaven he would send a Helper. They would remember what he said and they would be happy and look forward to his return.

We have been in a 2000 year long “little while” time of waiting for Jesus to return. We waste our time trying to figure out when that will happen. Jesus told his friends if they loved him they would keep his Commandments while they wait for him to return. When we take the Great Commandment to love God above all else and love others seriously...we are doing what Jesus wants us to do...and we should be happy until he comes back.

At every Requiem Mass we hear Jesus’ own words, which keep us focused and give us strength...he has gone to his Father’s house to make it ready for us. Our own “little while” time of waiting is not a time to sit idly by waiting for things to happen. It is a time for us to get busy doing the kinds of good works Saint Peter tells us to do in the Epistle.

Peter tells us to get ready for the “day of God’s visitation”...the day when Jesus will return. We should use this time wisely and make it productive...doing the things that are pleasing to God...helping others...and living the Good News about Jesus every moment of our lives.

Jesus does more than say “good-bye and good luck” to us. He promises we will see him again...it may be a short or long “little while”...we shouldn’t spend our time worrying about it. And he gives us the help we need so we don’t waste our time.

One day we too will see Jesus for ourselves, and our hearts will be filled with gladness, the kind of gladness no one can ever take away. And there will be no more good-byes...forever and ever.

✠