

XXV TRINITY 2018
SERMON – SAINT JOSEPH PARISH
FATHER CRAIG LOONEY
I JOHN 3.1-8 ST. MATTHEW 24.23-31



In the end, Jesus will re-appear and everyone will know he has come back. Will there be any surprises?

Welcome to the Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany...what...wait a minute...aren't we still in the Trinity Season? What happened to Advent and Christmas?

Our Prayer Book follows the *Sarum Missal* established by Saint Osmund, Bishop of Salisbury (or Sarum) in the 11th Century, in dating the Sundays of the year after Trinity Sunday. The length of the Trinity Season depends on how early or late Easter Day occurs.

When there are twenty-five Sundays after Trinity...as is the case this year...we go back and read the lessons appointed for the Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany.

During the Epiphany Season we talk about the striking appearances of Jesus...making himself known:

*...to wise men from a far-away country by a bright and shining star,
...to scholarly men in the Temple, teaching the teachers,
...getting baptized not for himself, but for us, ensuring we get empowered by the Holy Spirit,
...to the wedding guests in Cana by changing water into wine
...by healing people and making them whole again
...by telling us the Church is a mixed bag of people, just like the wheat and weeds; God will sort things out in the end,
...in the end, Jesus will re-appear and everyone will know he has come back. Will there be any surprises?*

Today's Gospel is about the final striking RE-APPEARANCE of Jesus at the end of time...making it a good end of Trinity Season almost Advent Season Gospel...when we talk about last things first: death, judgment, heaven, and hell.

While we're waiting for Jesus to come back...and we hope it will be soon...Jesus

warns us not to be fooled by people who claim to have special or secret knowledge about the end of time and his return...or even claim to be him.

Jesus tells us when such people come along we should not pay any attention to them. We must not believe anything they say...no matter how convincing they sound...or how impressive their supposed miracles appear. They will eventually be found out for what they really are...fakes and liars. Want a recent example...Jonestown...it happened 40 years ago today!

We can expect to see Jesus return in the same way the Apostles witnessed his striking departure at the Ascension...he will make a striking RE-APPEARANCE surrounded by clouds and bright light. The end of time is not something we should fear...because we know what's coming next...words can't adequately describe what awaits those who believe in Jesus in heaven.

The Gospel is called the Good News about Jesus Christ because that's exactly what it is...Good News...it gives us a consistent message of hope and expectation for a more perfect life in heaven when Jesus comes back. Until then...we need to keep ourselves busy doing God's work.

Saint John also tells us because we are people who do God's work...we should not let anyone deceive us with clever words or actions. We should always want to do what is right and not let the Devil or his agents distract us from doing good works. By attending Mass and reading the Bible daily...we arm ourselves against the Devil's tricks.

We are supposed to be spending our time now preparing for Jesus' striking RE-APPEARANCE. One day we will see God in the same way Jesus does...face to face. So we should always conduct ourselves like Jesus does...like God's children.

In the end, Jesus will re-appear and everyone will know he has come back. The surprise will be the gladness and everlasting joy he will bring with him.

So be it. Come, Lord Jesus!

