

**XXV Trinity 2024**  
**(Propers for VI Epiphany)**  
**Sermon – Saint Joseph Parish**  
**Father Craig Looney**  
***I St. John 3.1-8 St. Matt. 24.23-31***

✠

*In the end, Jesus will re-appear and everyone will know he has come back. Will there be any surprises? Will we be ready for his return?*

We're still in the Trinity Season, a time of personal and parochial Spiritual growth. When there are more than Twenty-four numbered Sundays after Trinity, as is the case this year, the Prayer Book directs us to use the propers as needed, for the Third through Sixth Sundays after the Epiphany.

The length of the Epiphany and Trinity Seasons are determined by the date of Easter. An early Easter means fewer Sundays after the Epiphany and more Sundays after Trinity. A late Easter means more Sundays after the Epiphany and fewer Sundays after Trinity. There can be a Twenty-sixth Sunday after Trinity. If you want to hear the propers for that Sunday...be here the next time that occurs...in 2038...14 years from now!

Today is the Twenty-fifth Sunday after Trinity. The propers for this "wandering Sunday", come from the Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany. Both the Epistle and Gospel readings deal with the "end times". That makes them perfect end-of-Trinity/pre-Advent lessons. Advent is the Season we talk about last things first.

Today's Gospel concerns itself with the final appearance Jesus will make at the end of time...his RE-APPEARANCE. It begins with a warning from Jesus not to be fooled by false teachers who claim to have secret knowledge about his return. They may be able to tell convincing stories; they may perform miracles. We are not to believe them; they will be found out and exposed for the liars they are.

While we're waiting for Jesus to return, we should pay attention to what John tells us in the Epistle reading. John reminds us God loves us so much he calls us his children. We should always want to do what is right and not let the Devil distract us from doing the good works God want us to do. We arm ourselves against Satan's tricks by reading the Bible, coming to Mass, receiving the Blessed Sacrament, and asking for God's Holy Spirit to keep us strong.

Our hope and expectation is Jesus will come back soon. We don't know when Jesus will return. It is a waste of time trying to figure out when he will come back, and it can cause us unnecessary worry. Worry, in fact, is a tool Satan uses to keep us distracted. God has his own timetable for working things out. We need to show him we love him as much as he has shown he loves us by trusting him.

In the Gospel, Jesus tells us he will return in the same way he went back to heaven at his Ascension. It will be apparent to believers what is happening and they will welcome his return. It will frighten only those who are not prepared and have spent their entire lives denying God and rejecting his love. We must always pray God's Holy Spirit will reach into the hearts of those who have rejected him and change them into people embracing God's love.

The Gospels are all about the hope and expectation for a more perfect life in heaven when Jesus comes back. In John's Gospel, Jesus tells us he has gone to make a place for us in heaven. It is his explicit promise to us and he always keeps his promise. His return at the end of time is something we should look forward to and pray will happen soon. In the meantime, we have work to do. Like God's children, we need to do our work and ask ourselves are we ready for his return if it were to happen right now, this very moment.

We are supposed to be spending our time now preparing for Jesus' re-appearance. God our Father calls Jesus his own dear Son. Saint John tells us in the Epistle since we are also God's children, one day we will be "like" Jesus, because we will see God the Father in the same way Jesus does...face to face. So we should always conduct ourselves like Jesus does...like God's children.

Next Sunday is the Sunday Next Before Advent. We will stir up our hearts and minds during Advent to welcome Jesus at his First Coming on Christmas Day, as the fragile flame of a baby boy. His Second Coming will be different...he will not be coming as a fragile flame... but with clouds and bright white light and flashes across the sky.

*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 for those ready to receive him. So be it. Come, Lord Jesus!*

✠