

III Easter 2023

Sermon – Saint Joseph Parish

Father Craig Looney

*1 St Peter 2.11-17 St. John 16.16-22*

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We say “good-bye” to family and friends all the time. We will do so when we greet each other after Mass or during the Coffee Hour today. There is an expectation we will see each other again next week or very soon.

Social media has made it possible for us to remain in contact with family and friends we don’t see very often. We see them virtually through our computers and cell phones. But we do miss being with them physically...we can’t hug our computers or cell phones.

We may only be able to visit family and friends in other cities or countries once or twice in a lifetime. Saying our good-byes can then be very hard...along with lots of hugs and tears...even if we see them virtually...it’s not the same thing.

The Gospels for the next few Sundays all talk about Jesus going away. They are from the long good-bye speech Jesus gave to his disciples at the Last Supper...on the night before he died. He is getting his friends ready for the “little while” times they won’t see him. That is not the message they wanted to hear.

Jesus told his friends he was going away for a “little while” and they wouldn’t see him. Then they would see him again for a “little while”. The “little while” times Jesus is talking about is the time after the Crucifixion when they wouldn’t see him; and then the time after the Resurrection he came to them when they were hiding behind closed and locked door...and they would see him again.

Jesus told his friends they would cry and be unhappy while they couldn’t see him. The evil powers of the world would be happy because they thought they had defeated him. Jesus would later tell us to be brave...because he has defeated the world.

Jesus tells his friends a story about a mother about to have a baby. When the mother goes into labor, she experiences pain. But after the baby is born, she cries tears of joy because a new life has been born. That is what it will be like for them when they see him again. Their sadness will be transformed into joy and gladness no one will ever take away from them.

It’s not hard for us to understand why Jesus’ friends were sad when he told them he was going away. Imagine how sad and upset we would be if our closest friends and family showed up at our front door one day and announced they were moving...and we might not ever see them again.

We have been in a 2000-plus-year “little while” time of waiting for Jesus to return. We are anxious for Jesus to come back and take us, and all those who believe in him to heaven, to be with him forever. Our sadness and anxiety we experience during this “little while” time of waiting is tempered by the strength we receive from the Holy Spirit to believe and persevere.

While we’re waiting for Jesus to return we need to stay busy doing God’s work here on earth. Our friend, Peter, instructs us how to conduct ourselves as God’s children. He calls us “strangers and refugees” in this world. This is our temporary home...heaven is our final destination.

Jesus told his disciples to go out to people in every corner of the world and make them disciples too...to teach them...and help them learn to obey his commandments. We...the Church...share in that discipleship...it is our mission to spread the Good News to others.

We have no reason to be sad during this “little time” of waiting for Jesus to return. While we wait let’s remember the promise he made...

*...“I will be with you always, to the end of the age.”*

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