

III Easter 2026

Sermon - Saint Joseph Parish

Father Craig Looney

I St Peter 2.11-17 St. John 16.16-22



We're now at about the midpoint of the Easter Season. Commencing with this Sunday and continuing through Pentecost, the Gospel readings take us back to Maundy Thursday. They serve as a sort of "advent season" for Pentecost, beginning with Jesus' prediction of his death and resurrection, and culminating with the gift of the Holy Spirit after His final departure when he is taken from the disciples sight.

Jesus tells his friends in a "little while they will not see him any more, and then a little while later they will see him, because he is going to the Father." The disciples were confused by what Jesus said and asked what all this talk about "a little while" meant. Jesus knew they were confused. He then tells them they will be sad when he goes away...but the world will be glad. He tells them not to worry...their sadness will turn into gladness beyond anything they could possibly imagine.

Jesus likens his departure to a woman in labor. The pain and suffering a woman feels when she is in labor, is soon forgotten when the baby is born. Mothers out there might be thinking to themselves..."How would he know?" Granted...no father can ever experience what a mother goes through when she gives birth to a child. And that's not the point Jesus is trying to make. It's all about the "little while" time of waiting for the baby...a new life...to be born.

The disciples were clearly not ready to say good bye to Jesus. They were happy to see the risen Jesus again. They were not ready for a "little while" time of waiting for him to return. But Jesus tells them the "little white" time of waiting will give way one day to his return. And like the mother who has gone through labor...they would soon forget the sadness they felt after he went away. The joy and gladness that will come with his return...no one will take away from them.

All of us spend time playing the "waiting game". We wait for trains, planes and buses. We wait at doctor's and dentist's offices. We wait to meet someone for lunch or dinner. We wait for our kids to come home from school. It has often been said the only two things certain about life are death and taxes. We might want to add to that...waiting. Waiting can make us anxious and sad...and the end of the "waiting game" should make us happy.

We have now been in a “little while” time of waiting for Jesus to return that has lasted over 2000 years. Jesus did not give us a timeline for his return. What we must learn from this “little while” time of waiting is that it will not last forever. Like the mother who goes through the discomfort of pregnancy...she knows that “little while” time of waiting will not last.

Jesus also told the disciples the world would be happy he was gone. He was talking about his crucifixion and people who thought they had gotten rid of him forever. During our “little while” time of waiting for Jesus to return, we too will experience the hostility of a world actively working against God. We always pray for peace in the world and for Jesus to come back soon...and bring our own “labor pains” to an end. While we’re waiting for the to happen...we have work to do.

Our friend, Saint Peter, tells us we are only strangers and refugees in this world. We have been empowered by the Holy Spirit to be examples to the world by how to live our lives in accordance with God’s plan...that we do good works and that evildoers will see our good works and change their lives and start to praise God.

Peter gives us a list of things we must do. We must “submit to every human authority”. We might not like our elected officials or their policies. We must pray for “the governor, the president, and all others in authority” that they too will honor and praise God. Peter tells us to respect everyone, love fellow believers, have reverence for God and respect our elected officials. We do not get to opt out of praying for people we dislike. Jesus prayed for everyone...so must we!

We should not be sad because Jesus hasn’t yet returned. Far from it! We are glad because he went back to heaven and sent the Holy Spirit to guide us and strengthen our Faith as we wait in joyful expectation for his return. Our “little while” time of waiting should be a dynamic and active time of spreading the Good News about Jesus and the joy that comes from knowing him and his promise of eternal life...and Jesus always keeps his promises.

Jesus said good-bye...but only for “a little while.” We will see him again, just as he promises we will. And so our hearts are filled with joy and gladness...the kind of joy and gladness no one can ever take away from us.

✠