

JUBILATE (EASTER 4)

April 25 2021

Old Testament: Isaiah 40:25-31

Epistle: 1 Pet. 2:11-20

Gospel: John 16:16-23

Standing...

Alleluia—Christ is Risen.

He is Risen indeed—Alleluia.

Jubilate means, "Rejoice."

Marking today as the Sunday of Christian joy.

Let us pray. These are Your words Holy Father. Sanctify us in truth. Your Word is truth.
Amen.

Sitting...

Is Jesus speaking in parables again?

What is He talking about with this, "little while" business?

The disciples were confused by it, and gratefully, Jesus explains Himself.

It was Thursday night—what the Church calls Maundy Thursday.

Jesus has already washed everyone's feet,

Judas has already left to engage his plans of betrayal,

and Peter has already vowed that he would never deny Christ.

And just like before, Jesus speaks to them about His upcoming death,

wherein He explains what lies just around the corner for Himself, and for them.

He says, *"Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament,*

but the world...the world will rejoice and you will be sorrowful..."

The disciples will weep and lament because each of them would know the horror
of Jesus' arrest and torture.

I mean, this is a rabbi for crying out loud!

This is not a criminal.

The disciples left everything to follow Him,

but they will see Him stripped, mocked, humiliated and beaten.

And then, when He dies, in the most horrific way imaginable,
the world and its Prince would rejoice.

It's difficult to fathom,

but the death of Jesus is the joy of the unbelieving world.

Consider that: The death of Jesus

and Him placed into the tomb

is the great joy of the world—

wherein they march in the streets and celebrate.

But why? Why such hostility? The Bible says,

"...the light has come into the world,

and people loved the darkness

rather than the light because

their works were evil" (John 3:19).

And so, just as Abel's blood stained the ground outside of Eden

the blood of God is poured out at the hands of evil men outside of Jerusalem.

Leaving the disciples to do nothing but weep and lament.

But that they not fall away when these things happen,

Jesus tells them, *"a little while and you will not see Me."*

The darkness both of Golgotha and the tomb would

conceal Him from their sight.

For a little while they would not see Him—

because Death and the grave would swallow Him whole,

just as that large fish swallowed Jonah of old.

"But, Jesus says, your sorrow will turn into joy."

Really? It will.

And to show what this is like Jesus gives the disciples a visual...

a picture of a mother about to give birth. Something common to us all.

As her contractions increase, her laughter is silenced.

The pain seems it will never end.

So much so that fear can even take hold,

afraid if she and the baby will survive.

But there is an end to it.

For in a little while, all of her tears are turned to laughter,

fear is turned to relief,

and sadness is turned to joy.

All at holding that newborn child in her arms.

It's a beautiful picture.
 And our Lord tells them,
*"So also you have sorrow now,
 but I will see you again,
 and your hearts will rejoice,
 and no one will take your joy from you."*

As you know, on the third day, after what had taken place on Friday and Saturday,
 the light of that Easter Sunday morning brought this promised joy.

The stone was rolled away—the tomb found to be empty, and
 dazzling angels preach their resurrection sermon.

"Why do you seek the living among the dead?"

"He is not here, but is risen" (Luke 24:5b-6a)!

And then, just as Jesus promised, the disciples saw Him again.

Jesus did exactly what He said He would do.

He defeated Death.

He defeated Sin.

And He crushed the head of the Devil.

So, He's right again—

The sorrow of the disciples

gives way to rejoicing,

and their weeping gives way to joy.

Beloved, Christ's words were not just for His disciples then.

They are for His disciples now—for you.

For by them He explains what lies around the corner for us all.

You see, because, "for a little while now...you do not see Him."

And what we do? We weep and we lament.

Because from our birth to our death,

we travel and labor through this valley of tears—

a valley characterized by hardships, suffering, loss, grief,
 persecution and pain.

Sure, we have some mountaintop moments—
 here and there, but they don't last very long.

And no matter how hard we try to climb out of the valley,

or even deny we're in it,

there's no escape.

The walls of the valley are too steep, and the valley is too dark.
 So, the tears keep flowing and the anguish continues
 until our last, dying breath.
 And the godless world?
 It just continues to spew forth its lies,
 proclaiming its deceptions and false promises.
 So, the sorrow Jesus prophesied,
 is what each and every one of you
 have known.

Sounds terrible, doesn't it? How can this be the Sunday of rejoicing?
 Because, Jesus said this valley of tears would only last "a little while."
 It does not last forever.

For just like a woman in labor,
 there's an end to the tears, an end to the suffering,
 an end to the persecution, the sin, the pain,
 even an end to the devil himself.

So let the devil, the world, and all the tyrants storm and rage.
 Let them growl, let them thrash, for they can only do so as God permits
 and they can only do so for a little while.
 Because, as Jesus says,
"So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again,"

This is when Christ,
 whom you cannot see now,
 Christ who ascended into heaven,
 comes again in glory,
 leading you out of the valley of the shadow of death
 into the light of life.
 For, as the Prophet Isaiah said,
*"the Lord shall renew your strength;
 mounting up with wings like eagles;
 running and not growing weary;
 walking and not fainting."*
 At this, Jesus says,
*and your hearts will rejoice,
 and no one will take your joy from you."*

That day is coming beloved.

Where compared to all the beauty and joy and glory then—
the anguish of this fallen world will be completely forgotten.

So, in the meantime,
you continue to live by faith—clinging to the promises of the One that you cannot see,
but He is nonetheless with you by His Word and Sacraments.

You see water—but in that water the Holy Spirit gives new life,
where God placed His name upon you,
marking you as one of the redeemed.

You see bread—but in that bread Christ places His body.
You see wine—but faith knows that you drink His blood
shed for you for the forgiveness of all your sins.

In the meantime as well, you're a sojourner in this world—
a citizen of the heavenly Kingdom.

So, you don't hearken to the teachings of this world.

Nor do you fall into their behaviors.

And even if you do, you repent—

returning to the waters of your baptism and receiving forgiveness.

Finally, you patiently endure any misfortune,
comforting yourself with the truth

that your Lord is with you...

and that this life—all of it is only "a little while."

For the dawn of glory awaits.

In the Holy Name of Jesus, Amen.

Standing...

And now may the peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and
minds through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.