

St Thomas' and St Thomas of the Air Church
 May 8, 2022
 Easter III
 rmceely+

Ye shall be sorrowful
 But your sorrow shall be turned to joy.
 I will see you again
 And your heart shall rejoice
 And your joy no man taketh from you.

The Gospel for today and in fact, every Gospel for the next 4 Sundays are from St John's first person account of Jesus' Final Discourse.

John recounts the Final Discourse

And takes us back to that dark night in Jerusalem
 the night of Jesus Arrest,
 the night of the Last Supper
 Jesus has the 12 sequestered in the upper room.
 These men who have been closest to Him
 For the 3 years of His earthly ministry
 It is the last time He will be with them in this life.

Jesus knows what is about to take place
 Knows the fate of each of the men.

Only John will escape the martyr's death
 There is one last time to give them counsel
 Give them what they will need to
 Spread the Word
 Build the Church
 Do all that needs be done to bring Jesus' Work to
 fruition.

The lesson He leaves them in this section of the Final Discourse is
 Hope in the face of adversity.

Knowing what lays ahead for them

Jesus tells them without detail of His death and resurrection:
 “In a little while, you will not see me
 And in a little while you will see me.
 Because I go to the Father”.

Words of plain meaning to us who know the rest of the story
 But to the Apostles

An undecipherable code.
 They ponder; in a little while? What does He mean?
 He ignores their quandary

Tells them of the pain and sorrow they are about to feel
 The separation of death cannot occur without the sorrow
 There cannot be love without its sacrificial pain
 But Jesus reassures them
 that their sorrow
 will be turned to joy.

As Joyous and pleasant as our lives are here at St Thomas’
 Every Christian life has its dark days
 Pain
 And despondency

We ask the heavens and we ask ourselves
 “how long can this go on?”
 “Lord, how long must we endure?”

We have been through a lot in the last two years.

But even now as life seems to be returning to normal

The people of our little miracle church
 Face new challenges
 The ravages of time seem to be catching up on us
 Some of us are feeling it
 And perhaps hearing the footsteps of our mortality
 There has been loss,
 Even death among us.

And then,

 There is this Gospel for today.
 Jesus Himself speaking with us.
This Gospel fixed in time for the 3rd Sunday After Easter.
The Gospel of Hope.
Exactly what we need in this hour of growing dispare.
Don't you just love how God works?

It seems that, like the Apostles
 We too shall weep and lament
 We too shall be sorrowful
 And it seems that we must endure
 Until our sorrow is turned into joy

There is a high plateau in the South American Country of Chile
A place between the South Pacific and the Andes Mountains
Where the sun shines literally every day
Even cloudy skies are a rarity
One would think that such a place would be a Sun filled paradise
 And Joy would abound
However, up there in the rarified air
 There is no rain
 No snow
 No heaven borne moisture of any kind. Zero

Nothing grows there. Not a tree
 Not a plant, Not blade of grass
 Not a cactus.
It is a barren rocky wasteland

Without the occasional rain storm to blot out the magnificent sun
 Nothing grows
 And so there is no human habitation.
 There is no life of any kind there
It seems that God's plan for the planet Earth

Is that there must be occasional adversity
If life is to be sustained?

As Jesus forewarned the Apostles,
He forewarns us
That there will be sorrow and lamentation
But He makes a promise
Our sorrow will be turned to Joy.

It has been my privilege to baptize a number of babies here at St
Thomas and at other churches in the Diocese.

I wish you could see the face of the mother
As she hands me the baby.
She is beaming,
angelic in her love of the child,
a picture of joy.
The baby is causing that joy.

But only a few months before,
In the strains of childbirth,
her face bore a very different look indeed:
in the cause of the same baby
that now brings her such joy.

In a little while.

Yes: Jesus skipped over the Apostles' question, "how long"?
He skipped over the Apostles' sorrow
to the time that sorrow would turn to joy
and focused them on their joy.
In a little while

Jesus promised them that their adversity would be turned into Joy
Joy such that no man can take it away

Hope for that better day

Now, Hope, in Christian terms

Is not a wish

Not something we wish to come true

But Christian Hope:

Is that rational and reasoned expectancy of what will come to pass. A firm knowledge

Upon which we can and do rely.

We who now know what came next can understand what Jesus is telling the Apostles:

The crucifixion,

the cross shall cause you sorrow.

It will kill Jesus.

We know at they could not

it will be the same cross that later shall cause such joy.

It was by the cross that Jesus paid for our sins

It was by the cross that death was defeated.

It was by the cross that we can be saved unto heaven.

It was by the cross that we may enter eternal life.

It was by the cross that Jesus overcame death.

It was by the cross that we may know joy.

The very thing that caused such sadness

is the very thing that turned that sadness into joy.

It is a very important aspect of our Christian lives;

In the worst times of our lives we ask

“Lord, how long must this go on?”.

He does not care about the time.

His emphasis is strictly upon what is coming at the end:

the joy which is certain.

He takes the very thing that is causing us heartache and sorrow and turns it into the cause of great joy.

It takes some time. It is a process and it is entirely internal.

There is a fountain within us,
 that is constantly springing up,
 welling up
 the Holy Spirit.

Over time the Holy Spirit,
 God within us,
 Jesus within us,
 will cause the pain to transmute into joy.

In a little while.

On that dark night in Jerusalem in the upper room; in a little while

 The son of God will be dead

In a little while

 Jesus would give up his spirit to give life to sinners

 Death's stranglehold will be broken

 The Son of God would rise from the dead

 There is victory over sin,

 death

 and the power of the devil

In a little while

 The apostles will see their risen Lord alive and glorified

 They will see the fulfillment of the ancient scriptures

 They will see the fulfillment of Jesus words

In a little while

 Jesus will return to this earth

 In glory

 to take you and me into His eternal kingdom

 that has no end

In a little while

 We will join the saints and those who have gone before

 to know God face to face

In a little while

All the treachery and evil of this world will pass away
And Jesus will come again in glory

A little while

maybe after our allotted days are already used up.
But never mind.
You are baptized.

And in a little while, you will stand before the Lord a condemned creature.

No matter
Because Jesus died on the cross and has redeemed you.
You are one of His, for whom he died.

In a little while.

Beautiful words to which the Church responds;

Come Lord Jesus

Come.

Our anguish shall be turned to Joy

Our Hope shall carry us through

In a little while.