

Saint Thomas and Saint Thomas of the Air Church
The Third Sunday after Easter
May 11, 2025
rmcneely+

“ . . . and I will see you again,”

On this Sunday and for the next three Sundays
Saint John takes us back to the night of the Last Supper
The institution of our Holy Communion
The washing of feet
The betrayal.

We are there in the Upper Room
With Jesus and the twelve
They don't know what we know:
It will be for the last time.

Before the sun sets again,
He will be dead
In His mother's arms at the foot of the Cross.

It is the climax of His three-year Earthly Ministry.

One last time to prepare them for what is to come
One last time to instruct
To inspire
To instill in them what they would need
To spread the Gospel
The story of the Good News
To establish the church
That would carry the Word around the globe.
To give them what they would need to withstand
their martyred deaths.
One last talk. . .
what we would know as “His Last Discourse”.

John, the eyewitness, was there and preserved what happened
And what Jesus said.

He had let them know what was going to happen several times.
Did they understand His words?
We think not.

It would be later that they put it all together
They recalled His words
And in a flash of recognition
They understood what He had told them.

As we will find over the next 3 weeks
The Last Discourse contains many thoughts and messages.
The one toward which St John points us this day
Was for them,
But is also what we need.

Jesus told them that while they wept and lamented
The World would rejoice.

Can we imagine the depth of their despair,
When they learned of His crucifixion?
We know of our own lamentation and weeping;
For Him,
And for the times in our lives when life takes its toll.
While the World rejoices.
While the secularists of our day
Gloat at our anguish
And their transitory and mistaken affirmation
that all we believe
by faith,
Is illusory.

Jesus forewarned them that it would happen.

He wanted to arm them against the cruelty of the World
The World ruled by the prince of darkness.

There is a mighty weapon of defense against the onslaught.

One that sometimes is just beyond our recall;

One that sometimes gathers dust on the shelf.

Jesus gave them and eternally gives us

HOPE.

Here we must step aside for a moment

And understand what Christians are talking about when they
Use the word, Hope

Because it is a fundamental concept in Christianity.

John wrote the Greek word *helpis*.

Which the 1611 researchers translated as *hope*

In the King James Version.

Hope is an ancient word from Middle English *hopa*

Meaning trust or confidence.

In the centuries since then, our English word Hope has acquired
something of a different meaning than it had in 1611.

Almost the opposite meaning in fact.

Satan at work? You decide.

We now use the word hope two ways

As a verb: something we do

And as a noun: a person, place or thing as my 6th grade
teacher Mrs Westcott taught us.

As a verb, hope means to wish something might happen.

I hope it does not rain tomorrow, we have a picnic planned.

But as a noun, Hope is a thing.

And that is how a Christian uses it.

As a noun, Hope has nothing to do with a wish or a desire.

As Christians use it:

“Hope” has nothing to do with any uncertainty at all
and nothing to do with any possibility of doubt
more than what we expect might happen.

It is the absolute and firm knowledge

With no room for questioning

In the truth.

It is the absolute knowledge that God fulfills the promises He
made to mankind.

That Jesus will come again

We will see Him again

That we have been given the very pathway to God

By His death, resurrection and ascension.

That Jesus is the Hope of mankind.

So we get back to the ancient definition of Hope or Hopa of
Middle English:

Trust and confidence.

That night in the upper room, Jesus promised them and He
promises us:

*“I will see you again
and your heart
shall rejoice;
and your joy
no man taketh away.”*

Our Hope is the absolute and solid knowledge

Affirmation and expectancy

That we will see Him again

Eternally

And we shall rejoice.

Hope as it is understood in Christianity

Is one of the three theological virtues, a gift from God
 Along with Faith and Charity,
 They are the God-given qualities of our lives
 That form the foundation of Christian Life.
 The attributes that bring us to God.
 That give us the ability to follow His Will in our lives.

That night in the Upper Room
 Jesus gave them and gives us
 Hope.

With Hope we know to an absolute certainty
 That Jesus will complete what He began that night.

On the third day, the Apostles were witnesses to the Resurrection
 They saw, heard and felt
 The affirmation
 Personified in Him.
 Hope was verified, confirmed and validated.

It is our hope
 Our Christian Hope
 That carries us through the dark times of our lives.
 And it is a powerful force throughout the world.

In the famous work of Alighieri Dante, “the Divine Comedy”
 Specifically, the “Inferno” of that work
 Dante describes his journey into Hell.
 As he reaches the gates of Hell
 There is a sign above the portal that reads
 “Abandon hope
 All ye who enter here.”

In Dante’s vision of Hell
 There is no Hope
 For its inhabitants, perhaps the definition of Hell.

In our fallen world
The nihilists
The atheists
The secularists
Are all about quashing and destroying our Hope.

The Anglican Province of Christ the King
is a continuing province born in 1977
at the convention of St Louis.
Our Archbishop Robert Morse was asked to give the sermon to
close the convention.

In that sermon, He described our vocation, clergy and laity alike is
To give our people
Hope, faith and strength.
39 years ago he founded this very church
In the city named for a Saint,
On a street named after the Sacraments
As a fortress,
a bulwark
of that vocation of
Hope.
From which we can and will continue
To offer Hope.

Our hope is in the love of God.

The 16th century Spanish mystic, priest, poet of the Carmelites
Saint John of the Cross
Told this true story
Mentioned by Archbishop Morse near the end of his sermon:

At the monastery in Andalusia resided a brother of the order,
 A pock-marked peasant
 Bent with age.
 Illiterate and untutored
 Ignored, unseen and unknown.
 He worked in the monastery
 Opening doors
 Scrubbing floors on his hands and knees
 Dragging baggage

Suddenly he was stricken in death agony
 And began to slip away.
 St John of the Cross was with him

And suddenly
 The old man rose up
 and with a new face
 Aglow and transformed in joy
 He said

I see it, I see it, over and over
 He said "I see it".
 St John asked him
 Brother, what do you see?
 And after a time the old man said his last words:
 I see love.

In that is our Hope.
 The vision that sustains us in a pilgrimage of hardship
 Is the Love of God
 And our desire to share it.
 That love calls us to our individual sacrifice.

Our hope carries us through.

As Jesus told them that night
He tells us:

*“Ye shall weep and lament
but the world shall rejoice:
and ye shall be sorrowful
but your sorrow
shall be turned into joy.
And ye now therefore have sorrow:
But I will see you again,
And your heart shall rejoice
And your joy
No man taketh from you”.*

