

JUBILATION IN THE CHURCH

Christ is Risen!

Hear again the Word of God for this *Jubilate* Sunday, the fourth Sunday in the season of the Resurrection of our Lord, as Jesus says:

“Truly, truly I say to all of you that you all will cry and mourn, but the cosmos will rejoice; all of you will be sad, but your sadness into joy will become.”¹

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

There is a good possibility that you have seen one of our LCMSU at the U of A blue T-shirts. On the shirt-front, there is a challenge statement below the image of the Wildcat. It reads, “So You Want To See Jesus...” The defense of the Faith, the apologetic response to that comes from a text other than today's. Yet, the words of Jesus spoken just before the apostolic blessing of God's grace and peace also provide a jubilant response to the challenge posed by the students. Today we learn anew that the jubilation that comes from the Faith is promised and given by Jesus even during the times His followers experience hardship, sorrow and earthly loss.

This is a special Sunday of comfort given to us by our forefathers in the Church. Its primary reading is proclaimed to take our thoughts back to the night in which Jesus was betrayed. The wisdom of the placement of this day's comfort, following the proclamation of Jesus' resurrection, now for the fourth

¹ John 16:20

Sunday in a row, is timeless and timely. For, while we believers are creatures of time, and thus have lives built upon memories, we are also creatures of the “now.”

According to a recent article in Forbes Magazine, we, in the US, particularly those who were born between AD 1980 and AD 2000, are subject to *hedonic adaptation*, hang on, I will explain... *Hedonic adaptation* is a way to describe with two words *the human tendency to get used to any situation, whether thrilling or painful, in a way that dulls [one's] initial impression of it.*² Another way to express the result of that human tendency is to use a phrase that appears to have its roots in the AD 1950's but truly came to the fore in pop-culture with a mid-80's song: “What have you done for me lately?”

So, after four Sundays now, of “He is risen! He is risen, indeed, Alleluia!” some in the Church are possibly thinking, if not saying, “Yeah, I got that on Easter. When are we going to stop with that? Easter is over.” First, no it is not! Second, the answer to those who are wondering what God has done for us lately, when this “He is risen!” stuff will be done, is that this year it may be liturgically stopped on Saturday, May 23! (Oh, we may add an, “He is ascended!” chant to that beginning on May 14. But that will not change the declaration: “He is risen!”)

² Solomon, Micah. “Millennial Customers: The Experts In 'What Have You Done For Me Lately?' Internet. <http://www.forbes.com/sites/micahsolomon/2014/02/13/millennial-customers-and-the-what-have-you-done-for-me-lately-syndrome/> accessed April 25, 2015.

Our human tendency to get used to our situations, even the state of joy we had on the “Gold Day” of the Church Year, means that the jubilation and comfort of the Resurrection Feast may already be becoming dull for some. What civic duty took many of our minds away from the rejoicing of Easter Gold just ten days after the Feast this year? That was the day when you had to reckon and settle the “gold” you needed to pay in taxes. What news reports have clouded your Easter joy over the past three weeks? (Why, just yesterday in a deadly earthquake, thousands were injured, and at least 1,800 people were killed in Nepal and surrounding areas). In response to that, and any other tragedies which are coming on account of sin in this fallen creation, you who are the recipients of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, remain free to *conduct your lives among the nations that, though they continue to accuse you as evildoers, from your good works continually being carefully observed, they may glorify God in [the] Day of Visitation*³.

Such is to be the response of Christians to the conditions of this fallen world. We may truly conduct our lives in response to the gifts we continue to receive from God. Yet, we can become dulled to that which God is doing to and through us.

So, twenty-one days into the Easter season, the wisdom of the Church is to declare anew that which Jesus has done for you lately. That is, He took all your sins – not to free you to sin – but to free you from sin. He carried your sins

³ 1 Peter 2:12.

into death, even those of neglecting His Good News and becoming dull to the jubilation it brings. He shed His blood for you. Then, He rose in the flesh from the body of death, and declared you right with God.

Today, to help polish up the dullness of the season which may have already dimmed your joy in Christ's resurrection, God has called you again to hear His Word. In it you hear that which He promised to His first disciples. In that hearing you are freed to recall that His words are also for you. Remember, Jesus said to those who were going to be eyewitnesses of His Passion, death, and resurrection, as He prepared to enter that intense time:

"Truly, truly I say to all of you that you all will cry and mourn, but the cosmos will rejoice; all of you will be sad, but your sadness into joy will become."⁴

Today, the Word of God takes you back to Jesus' promises to His followers before He paid the full price for your sins and received the wages you deserve – death. His first disciples, whom He had gathered at table with Himself, would emotionally and spiritually be led from Passover joy into the true experience of walking through the Valley of Shadows. That journey would take place over parts of three days. On the first day, the disciples would behold a world of deep darkness and gloom wherein the Author of Life died in the sins of the cosmos. From the first into the third day, they all would experience deep grief and unbelief. On the third day, a growing number of those eye-witnesses

⁴ John 16:20

(apart from Judas who murdered himself in despair), would move into disbelief, then on to an awakening in the Faith, and, for a time, into joy.

From the path of Life along which Jesus led those disciples, God, through His Word, has been leading us. In the Faith He has given us a reflection of their experiences these past three weeks. As we think about that which He has done for us, we are called to remember that the first and earliest celebrated season of the Church Year is not even half over. We are in the time of the year that the Feasts of the Nativity and Epiphany look forward to, and to which the Feasts of the Ascension and Pentecost look back. Think of how far we have come through the Easter season this year. This season is for believers, for to be led on the Path of Life, one needs to be joined to the Faith of the One Who is the Way, Truth, and Life. Already, many of us have heard words like these proclaimed over the past twenty-one days:

- the resurrection witness: *They took the Lord from the tomb, and we know not where they placed Him!*⁵
- the divine message: *All of you must not continue to be amazed. Jesus, Whom you seek, the Nazarene, the One having been crucified: He has been raised...*⁶
- the resurrected Lord Jesus' words: *Blessed be the ones not beholding, yet believing!*⁷
- the Savior's declaration of His vocation: *I AM the Shepherd, the Good One. The Shepherd, the Good One, His life He continues to lay down for the sheep.*⁸
- Jesus declared today: *therefore, now all of you have sadness; but again I will see all of you and your heart will rejoice, and no one takes your*

⁵ John 20:2b.

⁶ Mark 16:7a,b.

⁷ John 20:29b.

⁸ John 10:11.

*joy from you.*⁹

Three weeks after Jesus' resurrection from the dead, the earthly time for the first witnesses of Jesus' death in our sins to His resurrection in the body had entered its second half. (At the time, they were not aware of that fact). Yet, we who have their inerrant record know what went on, and so, too has the time passed for us. Unless Christ comes on the clouds first, the Feast of the Ascension is coming to be celebrated on Thursday, May 14. On that day, the Christ candle will be extinguished during the reading which recalls Jesus' bodily ascending into the heavens.

Remember, in the first Easter season in the first century AD, forty days would actually elapse wherein Jesus, through various bodily resurrection appearances, would be seen by many of the faithful. His fleshly manifestations continued until Jesus ascended into the heavens and was hidden behind the clouds from the eyes of the faithful. Up to that day, they had been led by Jesus from His Passover celebration, to the horrors of Jesus' Passion and bloody death on the cross; and into His appearances before and among them. Jesus prepared them for all that, and returns you to all that, with words like these:

*"Truly, truly I say to all of you that you all will cry and mourn, but the cosmos will rejoice; all of you will be sad, but your sadness into joy will become."*¹⁰

⁹ John 16:11.

¹⁰ John 16:20

Just as those first followers of the Lord, in and out and in the Faith, lived out those words, so do all His followers from that time forward, in many and various ways. His words of comfort remain for the faithful, for you who have been given Jesus' Faith. They, through your regular hearing of His Word, your eating and drinking His glorified Body and Blood, are sustained in you to an end.

That end is not just your mortal life. Please recall that the Sundays of the Resurrection Season are celebrated in Christ's Church primarily so that you will be prepared to see the Lord in the Faith at the end. That is the Last Day when He returns on the clouds. Has that divine reality become dull in your hearing?

Return to that which God has done for you lately. He has come to you with His Word. He comes to you, calling you to repent of your sins so that He may repeatedly forgive them. He gives you forgiveness and life in the Sacrament of the Altar. He moves you in that life of forgiveness, His life in you, to live your lives that others (perhaps even those who have survived in Nepal, or lived through huge tax bills) may learn that God *does not afflict from His heart, or cause the sons of men to grieve.*¹¹

God knows what grief is – He gave His Son into death in your sins.
God knows what loss is – not one little bird falls from the sky without His

¹¹ *Lamentations 3:33.*

knowledge. God understands death – in the Person of Jesus, He died for you, and for all people.

God also knows joy. He, in Christ, has restored the faithful among mankind, and thus you believers in Christ, to the pinnacle of creation (though that will be fully revealed in and for you on the Last Day). Gods know the jubilation that comes from a sinner whom His Word turns to true repentance. God experiences the exaltation that comes when a single sinner stops rejecting His grace. Remember, Jesus says of His passion, death, resurrection, and ascension:

*Therefore, now all of you have sadness; but again I will see all of you and your heart will rejoice, and no one takes your joy from you.*¹²

“So You Want To See Jesus...” Well, here He is, fulfilling His promises for you in His Word and sacraments. He is Risen!

The peace which passes all understanding guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus

Resurrection IV, *Jubilate* (Historic One-year series)

Lamentations 3:22-33; I Peter 2:11-20; John 16:16-22

April 26, 2015

Pastor Michael A. Morehouse

SOLI DEO GLORIA

¹² John 16:22.

“(A) little while and no longer will all of you see Me; then again, (a) little while, then all of you will see Me.”¹³

Then some from the disciples of Him said, “What is this thing He says to us, ‘(A) little while and not all of you will see Me; then again, (a) little while, then all of you will see Me’; and, ‘Because I go to the Father?’”¹⁴

Then, they said, “What is this [which He says], ‘the little while?’” We do not continue to know that which He says.¹⁵

Knowing, Jesus, that they came to Him to ask, then He said to them, “Concerning this, you all seek with one another because I said, ‘(A) little while and not all of you will see Me; then again, (a) little while, then all of you will see Me?’”¹⁶

“Truly, truly I say to all of you that you all will cry and mourn all of you, but the cosmos will rejoice; you all will be sad, but the sadness of you all into joy will become.”¹⁷

“The woman, when she births, sadness she has because it comes the hour of her; but when she may have birthed the child, no longer she remembers the tribulation on account of the joy because she has birthed (a) man into the cosmos.”¹⁸

Therefore, now all of you have sadness; but again I will see all of you and your heart will rejoice, and no one takes your joy from you.¹⁹

Sense translation:

A little while and then all of you all not continue to view Me as spectators in a show. Then again, a little while and you all will see Me for Who I AM.²⁰

¹³ John 16:16

¹⁴ John 16:17

¹⁵ John 16:18

¹⁶ John 16:19.

¹⁷ John 16:20

¹⁸ John 16:21.

¹⁹ John 16:22.

²⁰ John 16:16.