

Jubilate

St. John 16:16-23a

April 25th, 2021

Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC

Simpsonville, SC

St. Michael and All Angels Evangelical Lutheran Mission, UAC

Augusta, GA

All Saints Evangelical Lutheran Mission, UAC

Myrtle Beach, SC

Pastor Jerald Dulas

A Little While, and You Will Not See Me

In Nomine Iesu!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

Almighty and Eternal God, Who dost bid us walk as pilgrims and strangers in this passing world, seeking that abiding city which Thou hast prepared for us in Heaven, we pray Thee so to govern our hearts by Thy Holy Spirit that we, avoiding all fleshly lusts, which war against the soul, and being quietly obedient to the rule which Thou hast set over us, may show forth Thy glory before the world by our good works; for Jesus Christ's sake, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

As you have probably heard me say before, *Jubilate* marks the halfway point of the season of Easter. The halfway point of Advent, Lent and Easter are all marked by a rejoicing Sunday. In Advent, on the third Sunday, the Church rejoices at the halfway point on *Gaudete*. In Lent, on the fourth Sunday, the Church rejoices at the halfway point of Lent on *Laetare*. These two Sundays are set apart in some parishes by the use of rose vestments—not quite the penitential violet, yet not quite the celebratory white—to mark the halfway point of the season, and usher in a change in focus of the season. In Advent this is shown by the focus upon St. John the Baptist, whose preaching prepares the way of the Christ, as we shift our focus in that season upon the coming of our Lord + Jesus in His birth as a Baby Boy born in Bethlehem to the Blessed Virgin Mary. In Lent, this shift in focus occurs with the coming of Passiontide, where our focus is directed to the sufferings of the Christ on the tree of the holy cross for the sins of the whole world and the justification of all those who believe on His Name.

Jubilate also marks the halfway point of this season, Easter. Since this is not a penitential season, but is already a celebratory season, there is no need for a change in vestment color. In the first part of the Easter season the focus of the Church was upon the resurrection of our Lord + Jesus Christ. His resurrection gives all those who cling to the Lord in faith that the sacrifice that He made for the world on the tree of the cross was accepted by the Lord God heavenly Father. So that just as He rose again from the dead, we too will rise again on the Last Day and dwell with Him, and all the saints and angels in Heaven, with new and glorious resurrected bodies given to us who cling to Him in faith.

This Sunday of *Jubilate* (which does not refer to some new coffee drink at your favorite coffee shop), like the rejoicing Sundays in Advent and Lent also marks a change in focus for the Church. Our focus is drawn away from the resurrection of our Lord to His Ascension at the right hand of the heavenly Father, and His sending to us the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, who guides us into all truth through the

pure preaching of the Word of God and the right administration of the Blessed Sacraments. The Church prepares us for the Festival of the Ascension of our Lord and Pentecost by taking us to the night of our Lord's trial and arrest, and the day before His suffering, crucifixion, and death. Here in the Upper Room as our Lord + Jesus celebrates the Passover with His Apostles one last time, the Apostle and Evangelist St. John records the words of our Lord + Jesus that He spoke to them that night.

These words speak of His coming death, "A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me." For our Lord + Jesus will enter into the grave where the Apostles will not see Him. Then in three days they will see Him as He is risen from the grave. They will see the nail prints in His hands and feet and see the place in His side where He was pierced with a spear, and His Blood and water poured out, giving us a memorial of the Blessed Sacraments of Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper, in which He washes us in the waters of Holy Baptism with the Blood of His sacrifice, and He gives us to eat of His Body and drink of His Blood in bread and wine; the same Blood poured out for us by the piercing of the spear into His side. In that day their sorrow over His death was turned into joy when they saw Him again, Whom they had not seen for a little while.

For our Lord's Apostles this is what these words meant, but for the Church these words of our Lord point rather to His Ascension and His coming again on the Last Day to judge both the quick and the dead. All those who rejected Him and His sacrifice on the tree of the holy cross will enter into eternal misery and torment in Hell. All those who cling to His works and merits in faith will receive the crown of eternal life with Him in Heaven. There all the faithful will no longer be strangers and sojourners in a foreign land, a land that hates them for being different—that does not follow the ways and wonders of the world, but follows the teachings and admonitions of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ.

We, all those in the Church, are living in the time of little while. We do not physically see our Lord + Jesus as His Apostles saw Him; however, our Lord is still present among us. He is present with us whenever two or three gathers together in His Name to share with one another His gifts of grace. Here in this place the Holy Ghost directs our eyes to the works of the Christ; He guides us into all truth (as we will hear about next Sunday). Even though we do not see our Lord + Jesus as His Apostles saw Him in this time of the "little while," we still see our Lord + Jesus whenever we come to this place to receive His gifts. He is present with us in the pure preaching of the Word of God, where His works and merits are expounded to us, where we hear that we are poor, miserable sinners in need of the Lord God's grace and mercy, and where we hear that our Lord God extends that grace and mercy to us by forgiving us of all our sins on account of our faith in the sacrifice of His One and Only-Beloved Son, our Lord + Jesus Christ.

The Holy Ghost reveals that our Lord + Jesus is also present with us when we kneel before the pastor and confess our sins to the Lord God. We confess that we are indeed poor, miserable sinners in need of the Lord God's grace. And the pastor absolves us of our sins, the sins which we know and feel in our hearts, and are a burden and grief to us. Our Lord + Jesus forgives us of these sins which burden our consciences by using His minister—the one whom He has sent to us—by speaking into our ears that our sins are forgiven. The pastor forgives us our sins by reminding us that we are baptized (that is why in the General Confession that we make at the beginning of the Service the rubric states that only the baptized are to confess their sin and receive absolution; this absolution is for the baptized). The baptized who have confessed their sins receive the absolution by hearing the words of their Holy Baptism, "In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost."

Having been cleansed in the waters of baptism and absolved by the pronouncement of the minister of the Word, our Lord + Jesus invites us to sit down with Him, like He did with His Apostles in the Upper Room, and eat and drink with Him. He gives us to eat and drink of His Body and Blood in bread and wine. We come to His table and kneel before His throne and receive His gifts of forgiveness, life and salvation which He won for us by His sacrifice on the tree trunk of the holy cross. In a little while,

we will see our Lord + Jesus in His Body and Blood given to us in bread and wine. This is how our Lord continues to remind us that He has not left us nor forsaken us, but that He will do as He promised, and will come again on the Last Day to be with us for all eternity. This meal is a foretaste of the feast which we will enjoy for all eternity with all of the other saints in Heaven, both those who have gone before us, and those who will join us after we have obtained the crown of eternal life.

This is why today the Church rejoices—the Church is jubilant—that our Lord + Jesus has gone before us into Heaven to prepare a place for us. In this “little while” we do not see Him, but very soon “in a little while” we will see Him again; we will see our Lord and Savior in Heaven. Our travels in this foreign land of the world will be over. We will no longer be strangers and pilgrims in a world that hates us, but we will be reunited with all those who struggled in this life as believers in the Christ. Our pain and suffering will be over—our sorrow will be over—and we are filled with joy and gladness that have been made our Lord’s children, born out of the womb of holy mother Church. There in Heaven we rejoice and be jubilant that the little while is over, so that we may see our Lord + Jesus in all of His glory forever and ever. May the Lord God Almighty grant it to us quickly. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Merciful God, faithful Father, Who chastenest all whom Thou lovest, that they may not be condemned with the wicked, we beseech Thee, Thou wouldst comfort us in our afflictions with Thy Word and Holy Spirit, that by patience we may overcome the miseries of this present world, in the firm and joyful hope that Thou wilt speedily turn our sorrow into joy and glory everlasting; for the sake of Thy dear Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

The Votum:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria!