
18 Friday

FRIDAY, 6th Week of Easter

Acts 18: 9 - 18
Ps 46: 2 - 7
John 16: 20 - 23

Departures are sad, sorrowful, even painful events, at least for those 'left behind'. Before Jesus departed from His friends, He spoke about that difficult separation, encouraging them with words of comfort we hear again today. The words are recorded by St John as spoken shortly before Jesus' passion and death, when He Himself was about to suffer so much, physically and mentally and emotionally, in His leaving this world to make the "breakthrough" to His risen life.

Today, in Eastertime, we listen again. Now it's another 'departure' we're focused on, the coming disappearance of Jesus in His Ascension. For His disciples, a painful loss; but necessary for them so that they can receive the Holy Spirit and enter a new life. Then the pain will turn to an eternal joy.

One of the most striking of all the illustrations Jesus used in His teaching was that of childbirth --- the suffering and pain a mother has to endure in the process, but that's all forgotten as soon as the child is born. Joy in the new-born overwhelms what's gone before. Such shall be the overwhelming joy His disciples will experience after the inevitable sufferings and pain that being a disciple entails.

Our human lives are lived between two traumatic "breakthroughs" : being born, and leaving this world. Both have loss and pain attached, but the result is new life and joy. In the course of life it's the same, with all the lesser "breakthroughs" that we achieve or seek. May we more deeply appreciate all the joys we experience in life, as we look forward to sharing that great joy the Lord has promised us.