

Homily

4th Sunday Easter (C)

12 May 2019

“Almighty ever-living God, lead us to a share in the joys of heaven.”

If our religion is not giving us joy, hope and exuberance then there is something wrong.

Cry out with joy to the Lord, all the earth.

Serve the Lord with gladness,

Come before him singing for joy.

Jesus our *brave shepherd has gone before us*. He has suffered and died for us on the Cross. He has risen again and now sits at the right hand of the Father. He wipes away all tears from our eyes and *leads us into springs of living water*.

Such joy, such hope, such exuberance will always provoke a reaction of jealousy, envy and anger. For Paul and Barnabas, it was the Jews, for Pope Francis, it is the traditionalists and the conservatives. What is the Catholic Faith? Is it about prohibitions, divine law and moral perfectionism or is it about love, acceptance and dialogue.

“I John, saw a huge number impossible to count, of people of every nation, race, tribe and language; they were standing in front of the throne and in front of the Lamb, dressed in white robes and holding palms in their hands. One of the elders said to me, ‘These are the people who have been through the great persecution and because they have washed their robes white again in the blood of the Lamb, they now stand in front of God’s throne’.” The way to joy is always the way of martyrdom. And the agents of that martyrdom will often be from within our own communities, our own Church, our own families.

But *the lamb who is on the throne will be* our shepherd. He leads us through the washing of our robes white again in **his** blood, to heaven itself, to *serve him day and night in his sanctuary*.

Indeed, the end of our journey is not just heaven and eternal life, the end of our journey is complete union with the Lord Himself. *“The Father and I are one.”* United with Jesus in his death and resurrection we are united to God Himself.

“Almighty ever living God, lead us to share in the joy of heaven, so that the humble flock may reach where the brave shepherd has gone before, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever.”

Fr Michael