

7 Easter Monday 2020
JN 16:29-33

Let's discuss the writing of a gospel, any of the four gospels. I've preached more than once that the dates for writing of the four gospels are:

- ✓ Mark wrote in 65 AD
- ✓ Matthew wrote in 85 AD
- ✓ Luke wrote in 85 AD
- ✓ and John wrote in 90 AD

These men, these evangelists: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John did not actually write these gospels. By the time these gospels were written, these men were long dead. Their hearers, their communities wrote their gospels, recalling the words and deeds of Jesus of Nazareth, weaving them together based upon a theology that addressed the needs of their hearers, which was contingent upon what their church was going through at the time.

In 90 AD, John's Church was facing a persecution from the Jewish leaders. Since Jesus died, rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, the Jews were leaving

Judaism left and right and becoming Christian. As a result the Jewish leaders made the decision that anyone who converted to Christianity would be ostracized from the community. As a result, many of these converts were secretive about converting. They were called “crypto-Christians.” Crypt, lower Church, Crypt, underground, crypto Christians, underground Christians.

Today’s gospel places us yet again at the Last Supper, the night the disciples were going to desert him once all broke loose in the garden, hence Jesus saying:

An hour is coming – has indeed already come – when you will be scattered and each will go his way, leaving me quite alone.

However, in 90 AD, Jesus’ followers were scattering and leaving Him quite alone, because if they were found to be crypto Christians, they were given one opportunity to return to the synagogue before they would be ostracized. And many converted back because the risk was too great: I’ll lose my wife, my children, my family, my job, everything I know. I will be alone.

So Jesus, in today's gospel, is saying to the Disciples at table at the Last Supper, he's saying to John's church in 90 AD and, frankly, he's saying to each and every one of us, "I can never be alone. The Father is with me." And you will never be alone as I will always be with you. "You will suffer in this world. But take courage. I have overcome the world."

During this pandemic, when you may feel so very alone:

- ✓ literally due to social distancing
- ✓ figuratively as those you love are sick or have died,
- ✓ and they died alone.
- ✓ As your job is gone or at best insecure
- ✓ your paycheck is gone and the stimulus wasn't much
- ✓ your savings are being depleted
- ✓ and you're feeling quite alone,

How many of our service men and women died alone, on a battlefield, in a foxhole, on a beach?

As men and women of faith, you need to give "this," you need to give "this" to Him. And for some, this "this" is feeling alone. We need to give this "world pandemic" to

Him. Why? Because you will never be alone. Because of the last line in today's gospel. "I have overcome the world."