

Trinity Sunday B 2021 SB
MT 28:16-20

Many appearances of Our Risen Lord were sudden and very unexpected. But there was one appearance made by appointment that was planned and anticipated, and that was an appointment made at the Last Supper: “After I have been raised up,” Our Lord said, “I shall go before you to Galilee.” (MT 26:32) After His Resurrection, the angel at the tomb confirmed the same appointment:

Do not be afraid! I know that you are seeking Jesus the crucified. He is not here, for He has been raised just as He said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell His disciples, “He has been raised from the dead, and He is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him.” (MT 28:5-7)

And again, Our Risen Lord confirmed the same appointment:

“Jesus met the women on their way and greeted them. They approached, embraced His feet and did Him homage. Then Jesus said, “Do not be afraid. Go tell My brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me.” (MT 28:10)

This appearance of Our Blessed Lord happened on the familiar territory of a mountain, as seven important scenes from Our Lord's life took place on a mountain:

1. The third temptation of Christ took place on a mountain.
2. Jesus preached the Beatitudes and the entire Sermon on the Mount, for that matter, on a mountain.
3. He fed the four thousand on a mountain.
4. Jesus was transfigured on Mount Tabor.
5. Jesus was arrested on the Mount of Olives.
6. He was crucified on Mount Calvary.
7. And finally, He ascended from the Bethany mountain in Galilee.

Our Risen Lord did not ascend to His Heavenly Father until He was confident the Apostles understood, and was certain they could stand on their own feet. He would leave them, take them up the mountain where they had probably sat at His feet countless times: these fishermen, tax collectors, ordinary men, and bid them to take what He gave and taught, and change the world. And with the help of the Holy Spirit, that's exactly what they did!

The last word spoken to the Apostles was, "Go . . . Go and make disciples of all the nations." Yet before He could bid them, "Go . . ." He first said, "Come." Three years earlier, at

the start of His public life, the Disciples had learned from John the Baptist that Our Blessed Lord was indeed “the Lamb of God.” And two disciples followed Our Blessed Lord, Who turned to the disciples, and asked them, “What are you looking for?” And they asked Him, “Rabbi, where are You staying?” Our Lord responded, “Come . . . Come and see.”

This time of year, the end of May and the beginning of June, are primarily weeks of ordination throughout the country. I remember these weeks fondly for the five years I attended the seminary, each weekend in a different city, in a different cathedral, celebrating the ordination of a friend from seminary. And let me tell you, the receptions that followed were a great time because my dance card was full. I could dance with any woman there because as a seminarian, I wasn't a threat to her husband, her fiancée, or her boyfriend. A blast!

Next Saturday, Bishop O'Connell will ordain Father Roy's brother, Rjoy to the priesthood. Just what the diocese needs, another Ballacillo!

Two of my summer seminarians from years past are now pastors at St. Charles in Cinnaminson and OLPH in Maple Shade. Always great to get together or have dinner with a brother priest.

And this Sunday is Trinity Sunday. I offered my First Mass on Trinity Sunday, so today's feast always takes me back to my ordination weekend.

What men who are called to the priesthood do prior to ordination, is "Come and see." They follow the divine example of Our Lord Who, as the First Priest, spent thirty years of His life in quiet preparation for three years of intense public ministry. What a powerful example! He spent thirty years in quiet preparation.

The seed of any man's calling to "Come and see" comes from his first church, his domestic church, his Mom and Dad, his brothers and sisters. That's where every priestly vocation, known, or unbeknownst to them, starts, in the home.

It wasn't uncommon for me as a young priest to have one of the "little old ladies" come up to me after the Mass and say, "Father, tell me what your mother said when you told her you wanted to be a priest." My niece was married this weekend and as recently as the rehearsal dinner, the new in-laws asked what my Mother said. And the little old ladies would be clutching their Rosary in anticipation of the answer, expecting something along the lines of, "Oh, I always knew," or "Glory be to God, my son is going to be a priest." And in all honesty, I

had to answer, “I could never repeat in Church what my Mother said to me when I told her I wanted to be a priest.”

Franciscan Friar of the Renewal Father Glenn Sedano, who is their vocation director, talked about the domestic Church. Some candidates were humble enough to say, “Father, I’m here because my mother prayed for me. While I earned that scar over my eye, while I got that tattoo on my arm, my mother was praying for me. That’s how I got here.”

The calling of Our Blessed Lord to “come and see” intensifies when the man realizes the call to “come and see” is not so much what he wants to do with his life, but rather, what Our Blessed Lord wants him to do with his life. A strong candidate discerns that being a priest is what Our Lord wants him to do.

What an incredible calling the priesthood is – a calling to be an “alter Christus,” another Christ.

In the words of Venerable John Henry Newman:

Christ’s priests have no priesthood but His. They are merely His shadows and organs; they are Christ’s outward signs. What they do, Christ does. When they baptize, Christ is baptizing. When they bless, Christ is blessing. Christ is in all acts of His Church and all are His.

Father Manochio, who preached at my First Mass on Trinity Sunday 32 years ago, said it most succinctly. “Show me a priest. Show me Jesus Christ.”

I read a great book on priesthood, entitled Called to be Holy by the Archbishop of New York, Timothy Cardinal Dolan. His Eminence warns against priests and bishops who are so afraid of losing popularity and unsettling people that they turn into fluffy, least-common denominator Christian ministers. It was Christ who said, “I have come to light a fire on the earth and how I wish it were already blazing!” (LK 12:49) Our Blessed Lord has no time for least common denominator Christian ministers, because, as a result of least common denominator Christian ministers:

Christianity in modern America is, (as Dolan says) innocuous. It tends to be easy, upbeat, convenient, and compatible. It does not require self-sacrifice, discipline, humility, an otherworldly outlook, a zeal for souls, a fear as well as love of God. There is little guilt and no punishment, and the payoff in heaven is virtually certain. The faith has been overwhelmed by the culture, producing what is rightly called cultural Christianity.

Priests who model Our Blessed Lord, who came to light a fire on the earth”: are counter cultural.

1. To a society of violence and revenge, counter cultural priests stand for peace and forgiveness;
2. To a world satiated with sex, counter cultural priests are modest and chaste;
3. To a society frantic to spend, own and hoard, counter cultural priests model simplicity and sharing;
4. To a country that blames the poor, counter cultural priests urge care and justice.
5. To a world that divinizes the will, and holds that true happiness comes only when you have the license to do what you want, when you want, with whom and to whom you want, how you want, and where you want; and that any restraint to a higher authority is unjust, oppressive and to be defied;
6. To a society that urges us to keep all options open, not to be tied down, to always be ready to move on to something more attractive, to place conditions on all promises, to protect our own interests above all else, to move up and make more, and to demand rights and resist restrictions

Priests take the vow of obedience and the vow of celibacy.

That's counter-cultural, and that's the calling priests receive!

I'll close my homily with a greeting that a priest gives to a newly ordained on his ordination day and at his First Mass.

The greeting is and will be said many times these weekends in

May and June, and next weekend here in the Diocese of Trenton. *Ad Multos Annos*, Father Rjoy. *Ad Multos Annos*. Many Happy Years!