

6th Sunday of Easter Cycle C
May 13, 2007
By Father Charles Bowes

Acts 15:1-2, 22-29
Revelation 21:10-14, 22-23
John 14:23-29

Here we touch our future and the future of the world.

It's Sunday morning, and my family and I walk into the Church of the Assumption, my childhood parish in Jacksonville, Florida.

I was only about 6 or 7 at the time, but I was old enough to know what awaited me. Namely, it was about an hour of daydreaming, staring, squirming, and just waiting for an hour to pass in order for freedom to return. And so the question naturally sprung into mind. "Mom," I asked, "why do we have to come here?" Without batting an eye she responded, "Because here we meet God." (Moms have built-in catechisms that are made for situations like this.)

Her response didn't thrill me one iota, but it did content me - after all, it's hard to argue about coming to see God. So we entered the side door of the church, where I began another hour-long squirm session with the Source of all life.

She was right. Church is where we meet God. Word and sacrament, priest and assembly - we've learned it all before. God is alive and well as we gather together. But the Easter season doesn't leave us in the here and now. Not if we take our cue today from the book of Revelation, Chapter 21. Here we can find a daydream about the future. And if we stare through the church windows long enough, we'll see what John sees:

not simply an outside world, but a transformed world!

A holy city! A New Jerusalem!

Turns out, we're not the only ones who daydream in church. God's pretty good at it too. In fact, God stares so intently at the church walls that eventually, they break down. God's dream will make church overcrowding a thing of the past. The worship space is expanding, we are told. And once it's finished, the New Jerusalem will accommodate even the largest Easter assembly.

Maybe Saint John's description of the holy city sounds more like a description of the Emerald City from the *Wizard of Oz*. Flashing lights and jewels galore. But God's dream is no eight-hour snooze. It's a living reality. As a people of faith, we are called to do our daydreaming wide awake. The message God speaks has nothing to do with the Land of Oz, but our land and our world. It's the dream God shares with us, and for good reason. We need this dream - for real! We see headlines about war and terror, about sickness and scandal. We wonder if we're living more in a nightmare than a daydream. But God is faithful - to us, and to the plan that is now unfolding.

We await the fulfillment of that dream. We yearn for the day when church capacity will match city capacity, and today's headlines will melt into

tomorrow's footnotes.

So why do we have to come here? One day we will say that we don't. One day we will not have to go to church. We'll already be there. If only I could have told my Mom that.

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future of the world.*