

APRIL 9 2025 DEACON ROBERT KINGHORN

In the Gospel today, we hear Jesus speaking to some Jewish people who followed Him. And they felt that maybe they could just rest on their laurels: "Abraham is our father, that's all we need." But Jesus said, "Only if you remain in my word, then you are true disciples."

And I think this is a message for us today. Yes, we're born in baptism, and we walk with Jesus, but yet St. John in his Gospel told us exactly what it means to follow the words of God. Three times in John's Gospel it says, "You'll be raised up." He didn't just mean the Resurrection—He meant raised upon the cross.

And this is what He says: we have to follow Him in this journey. And I know many who join us in this Mass know what it's like to follow Jesus and His cross of suffering and pain.

Certainly, the great saint today, St. Kateri, she knew what it was like when her illness ruined her life and how she contracted smallpox. So today I think we're reminded that faith is a journey.

It's a journey that some people talk about like climbing a mountain. There's a book about \*The Seven Storey Mountain\*, and we always feel that the longer we go, we're getting closer and closer to God.

But you know, the great spiritual writers often say it's the opposite sometimes. The closer we get to God, the less we feel the presence of God in our midst.

Even Mother St. Teresa said in her darkness, "There's so much contradiction in my soul, such deep longing for God, and yet I don't feel wanted by God. I'm empty—no faith, no love, no zeal."

Sometimes we have that feeling in our life, don't we? We wonder, Are we taking the wrong path? Is it some sin of mine that's getting in the way? But Jesus is always there. At each step in our journey, we turn to the Lord and say, "Lord, I trust in You." And I think that's what St. Kateri said: "I trust in You, Lord."

But you know, also along the journey of life, there are all these grace-filled moments that let us turn to the Lord. Especially at the Eucharist—this transformation, this transfiguration of Jesus takes place right on the altar. We see bread, we see wine, and it becomes the Body and Blood of Jesus

And at these moments where we receive Communion, whether it's spiritually or sacramentally, Jesus says, "I'm with you. I'm always with you."

So today, as we go on this journey of life, we continue to remember: Jesus is with us at all moments in our journey. He never leaves us.

It's always these words of Jesus—"I'm with you always"—that give us hope. And I think especially in this Jubilee Year of Hope, we remember the hope the Beatitudes teach us.

We are people of the Beatitudes, but we are called in this Jubilee Year to bring hope to the other people of the Beatitudes—the poor, the suffering, the lame.

This, my sisters and brothers, is what we are called to do in this year, this Jubilee Year of Faith: to reach out to others and give them hope.