

I come in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

One Sunday when I was presiding, a mother with a fidgety child finally got him to sit still and be quiet. I felt sorry for her and was curious as to how she calmed him down. I learned that about halfway through the sermon, she leaned over and whispered, “If you don’t be quiet, Fr. Jerry is going to lose his place and he’ll have to start his sermon all over again!”

The Second Sunday after Easter traditionally begins with humor. Feeble attempt, but done. An article from “The Compass,” tells how St. Gregory Nyssa delivered a homily called “The Three-Day Period of the Resurrection of Christ.” He said Christ purposely concealed his real identity from the devil when he died. Satan, thinking Jesus was just another dead human being, swallowed the bait and took Jesus into hell. Satan realized his mistake too late. By then, he had admitted the light of Christ into the dark, infernal abode. That meant that Satan had destroyed his own kingdom. The power of God prevailed, even in hell, and God had the last laugh. It sounds like an undercover operation.

For Thomas, in our Gospel today, this resurrection thing was no joke. He wasn’t laughing. Like Sergeant Joe Friday in the TV series “Dragnet”, Thomas wanted “Just the facts, Ma’am.” Joe Friday never seem to laugh, either.

Today, many who “report the facts”, and consider themselves to be sources of truth, manipulate the information to support a particular viewpoint. You are left to decide what is true and what is not, what is factual, what is slanted, what is satire, and what is just plain silly.

So, today, in the spirit of distorting facts through silliness with a bit of a slant, I will deliver the sermon from the perspective of a news reporter. It’s up to you to decide if it’s true or not. Here goes:

We interrupt this service for a special News Report. This is Seymour Clearly. In our top story, a covert operation has been discovered attempting to infiltrate the minds and hearts of every human on the face of the earth. Many world-leaders are concerned! This operation is led by an alliance consisting of three-persons. Sources say that they surround themselves with an ever-increasing band of loyal members, who are supposedly dead. Law enforcement is baffled. Survivors have been told that the departed are really not dead, but rest in a place so amazing that it is beyond words. The recent disappearance of a purported Messiah figure is more than coincidental. This story smells a little “fishy.” Perhaps it is a conspiracy.

History shown that a small contingent of conspirators manipulate entire civilizations to behave in ways they wouldn’t ordinarily, and to believe in outlandish stories, for the self-serving purposes of gaining power and riches.

The conspiracy theory related to this story has been supported by the news source, called the Gospel of Matthew. Insiders reported that a debacle at the tomb involving this Messiah figure and Roman centurions resulted in payments of hush money, and the deliberate dissemination of false information. The centurions were ordered to spread the rumor that this dead Messiah's body was stolen to make **it look like** a resurrection.

The Lukan News Agency reported that a small group of women went to the scene, and found the "Messiah's" tomb empty. They returned to report that he had been raised from the dead. Coincidence? Those present were skeptical, and considered the sources as unreliable.

Undercover sources say that this three-person alliance goes by the name, Trinity, and is implicated in the missing Messiah case. The Trinity bosses go by the nicknames. Father - Son – and Holy Spirit. The one called the Father is the mastermind of the operation. He is the one that created the plan and put it in motion. The word on the street is that the Son went undercover as a human-being, and operated using the alias, Jesus of Nazareth. He was looking for opportunities to infiltrate the hierarchy of the local alliance called the Sanhedrin. It is said that his disguise was so convincing that you'd have to believe he was totally human, but insiders say there more to him than meets the eye.

This Jesus of Nazareth blew his cover by spreading propaganda called “The Good News,” and followed it up with a “protection racket.” Unlike the protection rackets of organized crime where people pay the mob to be protected from the mob, the Son offered guaranteed protection to his clients if they trusted him. Jesus of Nazareth demanded allegiance by commanding love, forgiveness, and mercy towards others, luring them into the propaganda of the Good News.

The Sanhedrin claimed that Jesus had no business horning in on their turf. Their boss ultimately put a hit out on him. His henchmen framed someone else in taking him out.

The one called the Holy Spirit operates undercover, and hard to detect on surveillance. He infiltrates a person’s soul and before they know it, they get hooked on the Good News. The Holy Spirit’s work is so covert, it can only be detected when his targets act in love in ways they never imagined.

Witnesses reported seeing Jesus secretly meet his disciples in the upper room, and convinced them that he was not dead. Thomas was noticeably absent. He convinced those present to believe in the Good News – luring them right into the Father’s trap.

Our roving reporter, Sawyer Hokum, witnessed Thomas returning to the upper room. He overheard him denying the resurrection, and demanded evidence to be convinced otherwise. He did not want to get caught up in the conspiracy involving the centurions or the emotional nonsense of the women.

Wait ! This just in! The Son, Jesus of Nazareth, was seen breaking and entering the upper room to reveal himself to Thomas. Word has it that Thomas has recanted his skepticism and had now joined forces with the other believers.

Sawyer Hokum rushed over to interview several of the apostles as they were leaving the upper room. They claimed that while they weren't looking, the Holy Spirit broke into their hearts and stole their skepticism and doubt, leaving behind only the Good News. The Good News campaign is taking off like wildfire. The Trinity is spreading it everywhere. Their plan is to take over the world! This operation aims to fill every heart and mind with love, care and mercy. As the Good News spreads, there is fear that everyone will get sucked right in! When will the twists and turns of this story end?

This reporter has to believe that there is more to this story. The Trinity obviously intends rule the world and to wield its power in order to get unbelievably rich.

Yet, private investigators have not turned up any evidence to support this accusation. In fact, they see evidence that believers in the Good News are the ones getting rich beyond all imagination. It is purported that the band of dead people are already sharing in the Trinity's riches – they call it eternal life.

People who want to be part of the alliance are coming forward to report that when they believed in Good News and accepted the protection racket, they found abundant evidence that the Good News is true. But this reporter needs to see the evidence!

The Good News is reportedly to have stated, “Some will not believe unless they see evidence. Others, through faith, will see the evidence because they believe!” Our forensic specialists have not turned up anything to substantiate this claim! Ladies and gentlemen, this is may be a scam. Beware!

Wait! This just in! Experts have just now discovered undeniable evidence to support the Good News! It has been determined that the believers themselves are the evidence! There are fingerprints all over the scenes when the hungry are fed, the poor are assisted, the naked are clothed, and the sick are visited. This reporter has to ask, is the Son really alive? Is the Holy Spirit breaking into the lockboxes of people's hearts and leaving love as a calling card?

Skeptics are searching all avenues to take this Trinity alliance down, but to date, they are unsuccessful. Be alert! The members of the alliance disguise themselves as ordinary people, marginalized people, and even broken people. You are at risk for being caught up in the propaganda that could bring accusations that you have fallen into the trap of love, forgiveness, and mercy. The most skeptical will take you to task for buying into the protection racket. In the end, the judge will have no alternative but to convict you of 1st Degree Intentional Faithfulness. That is the Good News! And that's no joke! This is Seymour Clearly signing off. Amen.