

Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord C2025

We celebrate today the Solemnity of the Ascension of our Lord Jesus in heaven. The mystery we celebrate in this feast is the same with what that we celebrated in the resurrection of our Lord. In fact, if God raised Christ from the dead, it was so that he sits at his right hand and becomes the Lord of the living and the dead. The Ascension and the Resurrection of our Lord are the two sides of a same coin, which the glorification of our Lord.

The Ascension of our Lord into heaven does not mean that he has left us alone. According to his promise, he will “be with us always until the end of time”. Therefore, though he is now in the glory of the Father, our Lord is still with us, through the power of the Holy Spirit. Before Easter, he could only be seen in one place at a time; he could only speak to the people he was with at that time. Now all these limitations have been removed; he is in the glory of his Father, but still close to us forever and everywhere.

The letter to the Hebrews presents our Lord as our High Priest who entered the sanctuary of God, once and for all, in order to offer his own blood for our salvation. As our High Priest, he takes away our sins and will come again to bring salvation to those who eagerly await him. In spite of our present situation of suffering and hardships, we have to be joyful in the awaiting of his return. We have to approach the sanctuary of God with a sincere heart and absolute trust in our savior.

The sadness of his visible absence is compensated by the certainty of his continual presence among us through the power of the Holy Spirit. That is what gives joy to the disciples. As the Acts of the Apostles relate, after the Ascension, the disciples “returned to Jerusalem with great joy and they were continually in the temple praising God”.

How did it come that the disciples were joyful and praising God? Is not that when we lose our loved ones we are sad? The disciples were praising God and joyful because they knew that our Lord who went to his Father did so in order to prepare for us a place. Where he went is the place we too should be.

Such vision gives us courage and hope that our future is brilliant. Whatever might be the difficulties we have in the present life; whatever might be the challenges we face every day, we have the certainty that one day we will share in the joy of heaven where our Lord has preceded us. Our present situation of sickness, crisis, ups and downs of life, is nothing compared to the glory that awaits us.

We should always remember that our Lord became a human being for our sake; he died and rose again for us. By ascending to the Father, he does it also for our good. That is why, he says in the Gospel of John, “It is much better for you that I go, if I fail to go, the Paraclete will never come to you” (16: 7). The going to the Father coincides with the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Advocate, whose role is to teach us and remind us of the teaching of our Lord.

The Lord who goes to the Father leaves us a mission, that is, to be his witnesses. As the Acts say, “You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth”. This is a task entrusted to each one of us, according to our vocation in life as husband, wife, father, mother, teacher, worker, priest, lay person, etc.

The mission received is also that of transforming the world. The more we transform this world in fidelity to our Lord and his word, the more we give witness to the world that we belong to him. In doing so, we show that our faith in Jesus can make a difference in the world. No one has the right to say that, because we are waiting the return of the Lord, we have nothing to do in this world.

It is in that sense we have to understand the words of the angels to the disciples: “Men of Galilee, why are you standing here looking at the sky”? The looking up to sky is the attitude of passivity. In other word, the angels are telling us: “Men and women, this is your time to transform the world. Do something to make the world and the earth a better place for future generations”. Even if the world is passing, we should never forget that the essence of our faith in Jesus is not only to care for the soul, but also for the body. After all, a man is a unity of the soul and the body. We have to take care of the one without neglecting the other.

The feast of the Ascension reminds us that, as a church and as an individual, we have received a mission from our Lord to become his mouth and his hands. In this mission, we are not alone, because his Spirit is with us amid the sufferings we endure for our Lord’s name.

May God bless the mission accomplished in his name among our brothers and sisters! May he bless the effort of evangelization done by many missionaries throughout the world! May our Lord be a source of strength for those who are worn out in the mission by hardships and difficulties! May God bless you all!

Acts 1: 1-11; Hebrews 9: 24-28; 10: 19-23; Luke 24: 46-53



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