Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord A2026

The resurrection of our Lord and his Ascension into heaven are the two sides of a same event, which is his glorification by the Father. The Ascension of our Lord is the crowning of the mystery of his resurrection and the beginning of the Church's mission in response to the recommendation to go preaching and making the disciples throughout the world, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Ascension of our Lord Jesus is the feast of his glorification that has already started with his resurrection from the dead.

As St Paul claims in the letter to the Ephesians, God has exercised his great might in raising Jesus from the dead. By doing so, he sat him at his right hand in the heavens, far above every principality, authority, power and dominion for all ages.

The resurrection and the Ascension are important moments of the mystery of the life of our Lord. By raising our Lord and by letting him throne at his right hand, God has put everything beneath his feet. He has made him the head of everything that exists in the universe, including you and me, and the Church, which is his body.

This is a grand mystery that can fully be understood only in faith, when God gives us a Spirit of wisdom and enlightens the eyes of our heart that allow us to truly know him and appreciate the inheritance he has reserved us in heaven. Then, we can understand that Christ who has ascended into heaven is always with us now, in the present age and in all the twists of our life, but in a different way.

Before the resurrection, 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 those limitations of time, space and material world are removed so that through the power of the Holy Spirit our Lord is perpetually present in the Church and to us until he comes again.

However, the fact that our Lord comes again does not mean that we know the hour and the time he will return. We cannot even speculate about it. In truth, it serves no purpose to know the times or the season about the return of our Lord. That is a secret that only the Father knows. What is important, for us, is to be spiritually prepared so that whenever the Lord comes back, he might find us ready.

That is a warning to each one of us because people like to predict the end of the world by interpreting the events happening in the world or in nature, as we have seen many times. The drama of our generation is that because we know a lot of things, people do not want to confess their ignorance with regard to the return of our Lord; they want always to speculate.

Meanwhile, as long as we are still on earth, we have to work for the transformation of the world in fulfillment of the mission of preaching the word of Jesus to the whole world. It is in that sense we have to understand the remark of the angels to the disciples: "Men of Galilee, why are you standing here looking at the sky"?

The looking up to the sky is the attitude of passivity and disinterest in the things of the world. Instead of looking up to the sky, we have to commit ourselves to transforming this world in the name of our faith in Jesus and to make it a better place for the generations to come. We have to use our religion as a factor of the transformation of the world and the bettering of the life of our fellow human beings.

We have to proclaim the Gospel to the nations and baptize people in the name of the Holy Trinity.

That is the mission that Christ has entrusted to the Church. The church has the duty to baptize in the name of the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The baptism that the Church administers gives us access to the people of God as people manifest publicly their intent to change their lives according to the teaching of our Lord, for their eternal salvation.

It is the same mission that is given to each one of us today. As disciples of Jesus, we have to continue the work of evangelization in the world so that all the peoples may come to know Jesus and receive eternal salvation.

Let us pray that the Risen Lord may help us preach him to the world with boldness, courage and persistence. May he bless the apostolate of many who give their time and talent to the work of the Church and the salvation of their brothers and sisters! Amen.

Acts 1: 1-11; Ephesians 1: 17-23; Matthew 28: 16-20

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