

Homily – Ascension A

Today's readings describe the Ascension of the Lord Jesus into his Heavenly glory after promising the apostles the Holy Spirit as their source of Heavenly power, and commanding them to bear witness to him by their lives and by preaching the good News throughout the world. The ascended Jesus promised the Apostles, "I am with you always; yes, to the end of time," and kept that promise through the indwelling Holy Spirit. Today's Feast is a celebration of Jesus' glory after his suffering and death – a glory in which we also hope to share.

The first reading, taken from the Acts of the Apostles, describes the scene of Jesus' Ascension, with the promise of the Holy Spirit and the instruction that the Apostles were to stay in Jerusalem until they had received the Holy Spirit, the Power from above.

In the second reading, St. Paul prays that Holy Spirit may enliven the hope of Christ's disciples in their future heavenly glory, saying, "May God enlighten the eyes of our heart so that we may know the great hope to which we have been called." Paul also teaches us that God revealed His might in the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ and in exalting Jesus over all angelic forces.

Today's Gospel tells us that, with his return to the Father, Jesus completed his mission on earth. But just before his Ascension, he entrusted to his disciples the mission of preaching and teaching the Good News and evangelizing the whole world by bearing witness to him through their lives. In the descriptions of Christ after his Resurrection, we are given a hint of what life will be like in Heaven. But it is in Jesus' Ascension that we see the Son of God and Son of Man entering fully into the life and glory of God. The prospect of sharing in that glory should be the driving force of our lives.

Messages: 1) As Christians, we need to be proclaimers and evangelizers. The difference between preaching and proclaiming is that we preach with words, but we proclaim with our lives. Let us ask the guidance of the Holy Spirit that we may bear witness to Jesus by our transparent Christian lives.

2) We have a teaching mission: Jesus taught us lessons of Faith, Hope, Love, forgiveness, mercy, and salvation both by living and by preaching them. Our mission is to bring them to others in the same ways. Hence, let us learn all Jesus did and taught through daily study of the Bible and the teachings of the Church, experience Jesus in personal prayer, reception of the Sacraments and works of charity, and, with the help of the Holy Spirit, convey to others Jesus whom we have experienced.

3) The ascended Jesus is our source of strength and encouragement: We will be able to overcome doubts about our Faith and baseless fears, anxieties and worries by meditating on Jesus' Ascension and the lesson it teaches that we, too, are called to share Jesus' glory in Heaven.