

Homily-Ascension: Reasons for Ascension: what does it teach us?

Today's readings tell us, what does ascension mean to us. We know, Jesus spent 40 days on earth after his resurrection, before his ascension into heaven. What are the reasons and the spiritual implications of His ascension in our life?

Jesus ascended from mount of olives. We may understand this in two ways: ordinary sense and spiritual sense. We may think, that it can be similar to the take off of a flight or a bird. But that is not what is intended. It means, *Jesus's entry into eternal glory.*

Why Jesus spent 40 days between his Resurrection and Ascension as recorded in 1st R.? *40 is a symbolic number* in the bible that signifies '*time for preparation and purification*'. Jesus appeared many times to his disciples, to prepare and purify their faith, because after his ascension, he would commission them to spread the good news of Salvation as written in the gospel today.

Therefore, Jesus ascends, *to send us an advocate-paraclete-helper*/to guide and assist us in fulfilling His mission. He said: 'It is better for you that I go, because if I do not go, the advocate will not come to you' (Jn 16.7) Jesus also instructed the disciples to stay waiting until the Holy Spirit come upon them.

Jesus ascends, *to prepare a place for us in heaven*: Jn 14:2-4: In my father's house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? Preparing a place for us, who believe in him sincerely, who love doing his will and does his work in serving others.

Jesus ascends, because he descended from heaven, from His Father, to fulfill a mission. Now, the mission being completed, he returns to the Father, to be absent physically from us, but to make us experience his presence spiritually, in a new way in our life through the Holy Spirit.

Today's gospel assures to us, his *perpetual presence* with us until the end of time after his ascension into heaven. There are two occasion the disciples experienced his absence: his death on the cross and his ascension. Hereafter, His presence is in another form, namely in the form of the Holy Spirit, that he will send us- on Pentecost-. (His other presences are in the form of Holy Eucharist and his living Word of God.)-(eg. *good Samaritan story*)

He has gifted us with these two gifts, food for our journey on earth. Therefore, on the last day, he will come to take the whole church-as the body to be united with the head. Christ is present in our Christian life, he intercedes for us at the right hand of the Father, and our readings teaches us, beyond doubt.

What is its implication in our life?

Before ascension, the *disciples were commissioned* to continue the mission of Jesus: *to make disciples of all nations*, to baptize in the name of the Father and the Son and the holy Spirit. "You will be my witnesses, to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:10) In short, Christ's ascension asks us to continue from where he left us, as far as his mission is concerned. Our mission and task as disciples are just a continuation and completion of His mission.

B&S, let us deeply experience his presence in the Holy Eucharist, in his life-giving Word and in the action of the Holy Spirit, who guides our every thought and action, every day. Amen.

Joke: On Mothers' Day, the two little sisters, a 4-year-old and a 6 year-old presented their mom with a houseplant. They had used their own money to buy it and their mom was thrilled. The older of them said with a sad face, "There was a bouquet at the flower shop that we wanted to give you. It was really pretty but it was too expensive. It had a ribbon on it that said '*Rest In Peace,*' and we thought it would be just perfect since you are always asking for a 'little peace' so that you can rest.