

HOMILY FOR THE ASCENSION OF OUR LORD

Introduction: Today's readings describe the Ascension of the Lord Jesus into his Heavenly glory after promising his disciples the Holy Spirit as their source of Heavenly power and commanding them to bear witness to him throughout the world by their lives and preaching. But the ascended Jesus is still with us through his indwelling Holy Spirit as he has promised, *"I am with you always; yes, to the end of time."* Today's feast is a celebration of Jesus' final glorification after his suffering, death, and Resurrection – a glory in which we, too, hope to share.

The first reading gives an account of the event of the Ascension as recorded in the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. First, Jesus instructed his apostles to *remain in Jerusalem and wait for the baptism by the Holy Spirit* so that they might become his *"witnesses to the ends of the earth"* by the power of the Holy Spirit. Then *a cloud took Jesus from the sight* of the disciples and two Heavenly messengers in white garments gave them the assurance of Jesus' *"second coming"* or return in glory. In the second reading, Paul explains the theological meaning of Jesus' exaltation, giving us the assurance that one day, we, too, will be ascending to Heavenly Glory, provided we fulfill the mission entrusted to us by the ascending Lord. Today's Gospel describes how Jesus ascended to Heaven after giving his final blessing and missionary command to his disciples. The command was to *"proclaim the Good News to the whole creation," "to be his witnesses,"* and *"to make disciples of all nations."*

Life messages:

1. We need to be proclaimers and evangelizers: In today's Gospel, Jesus gives his mission to all believers: *"Go out to the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature."* This mission is not given to a select few but to all believers. To be a Christian is to be a proclaimer and an evangelizer. There is a difference between preaching and proclaiming. *"We preach with words, but we proclaim with our lives."* As we celebrate the Lord's return to His Father in Heaven, we are being commissioned to go forth and proclaim the Gospel of life, love, hope, and peace, by the witness of our lives. On this day of hope, encouragement and commissioning, let us renew our commitment to be true disciples everywhere we go, beginning with our family and our parish, *"living in a manner worthy of the call, we have received."* Pope Francis' says: *"All the baptized, whatever their position in the Church are agents of evangelization."* Therefore, we are called to fulfill the will of God and the scripture as baptized Christians.

2. All of us have a destiny to reach like how Jesus went back to his father: In the Gospel of John Jesus say in his own words *"I came from the father and have come into the world; again, I am leaving the world and am going to the father"* we can see these words in Jn 16:28. We are all created by God and have a destiny to reach, the heaven where the father, the son and the Holy Spirit resides our eternal home.

3. We have a teaching mission: Jesus gave us lessons in Faith, Hope, Love, forgiveness, mercy, and Redemption. We cannot put these lessons on a shelf and ignore them. They stand before

us in the person of Jesus. Although no longer visibly present in the world, He is present in his words. We must make his words real in our lives and in the lives of others. Christianity was meant to be a Faith in which Jesus' followers would help and care for others, just as Jesus had done, and in so doing, care for Jesus in them. But the spreading of the Good News to all nations is not a goal that can be attained by human might and craft. This is why Jesus promises to empower his messengers with His abiding presence and that of the Holy Spirit. The challenge of sharing the Good News with all mankind should, therefore, begin with our admission that we have often been arrogant and overbearing. We must learn to be humble and let the Holy Spirit lead the way. Dear friends the feast of Ascension reminds us to celebrate the ever presence of Christ with us in the form of Holy Spirit who gives us strength and will to work for his kingdom; when we work for his kingdom everything else will be added to our lives.



Happy feast of the Ascension of Our Lord