

The Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord: Acts 1:1–11, Eph 1:17–23, Mat 28:16–20

Today we celebrate the great feast of the Ascension of the Lord. At first glance, this feast may seem like a farewell. Jesus is taken up into heaven, and the disciples stand looking upward, wondering what happens next. It appears to be a moment of separation and absence. But the Ascension is not about Jesus leaving us behind. It is about Christ entering into glory and remaining with us in a new and deeper way.

The Ascension tells us something extraordinary: our humanity has entered heaven in Christ. Jesus did not abandon his human nature after the Resurrection. The risen Lord who ascended still bears the marks of the nails. He carries our humanity into the presence of the Father. Heaven is no longer distant and closed. In Jesus, humanity now has a place at the heart of God.

In the first reading, the disciples are still thinking in earthly terms. They ask Jesus, **“Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?”** They are expecting political power and earthly victory. But Jesus lifts their vision higher. He tells them, **“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses to the ends of the earth.”**

The mission of Christ is universal. The Gospel is not only for one nation or one people. It is for every race, every language, every human heart. The disciples cannot remain standing on the mountain looking into the sky. The angels tell them, **“Why do you stand looking up toward heaven?”** In other words: the mission now begins.

That message is important for us today. Sometimes we also spend too much time looking upward while ignoring the suffering around us. The Ascension calls us not to escape the world but to transform it with the love of Christ. Jesus sends his disciples into the world to bring hope, mercy, truth, and compassion.

In today’s Gospel, Jesus gives the Great Commission: **“Go and make disciples of all nations.”** Every Christian is called to be a witness. We may think, “I am not strong enough,” or “My faith is too weak.” But remember the apostles themselves were imperfect men. Peter denied Jesus. Thomas doubted. The others ran away in fear during the Passion. Yet Jesus entrusted the mission of the Church to them.

Why? Because the mission depends not on human perfection but on divine grace. Jesus promised them the Holy Spirit. The Church does not survive by human strength alone but by the power of God working through weak and ordinary people.

This should encourage us greatly. God can work through us despite our weaknesses. A parent teaching child to pray, a worker acting honestly, a young person standing for truth, someone caring for the sick or elderly — these simple acts become powerful witnesses to Christ.

In the second reading, Saint Paul prays that “**the eyes of your hearts may be enlightened.**” Faith is more than knowledge in the mind. It is seeing life differently through the eyes of God. The Ascension reminds us that our destiny is not despair, fear, or death, but eternal life with Christ.

In a world filled with anxiety, violence, and uncertainty, today’s feast gives us hope. Christ reigns. Evil does not have the final word. Death does not have the final word. The risen Lord sits at the right hand of the Father, interceding for us.

And the most comforting part of today’s Gospel is Jesus’ final promise: “**I am with you always, until the end of the age.**” The Ascension is not Christ’s absence; it is his new presence among us. He remains with us in the Scriptures, in the Eucharist, in the Church, in the poor and suffering, and through the Holy Spirit.

Every Mass reminds us of this truth. Heaven and earth meet at the altar. The ascended Lord becomes present to us in the Eucharist and strengthens us for mission.

So today, let us ask for three graces: **First**, the grace of vision — to see Christ reigning even in difficult times. **Second**, the grace of courage — to live and witness to our faith boldly. **Third**, the grace of hope — to trust that Christ has gone before us and opened the way to eternal life.

The Ascension reminds us that while our feet remain on earth, our hearts are called toward heaven. Christ ascended not to leave us alone, but to draw us closer to God and to send us into the world as his witnesses. And so we rejoice today because the Lord who ascended still walks with us, strengthens us, and promises us: “**Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.**” Amen