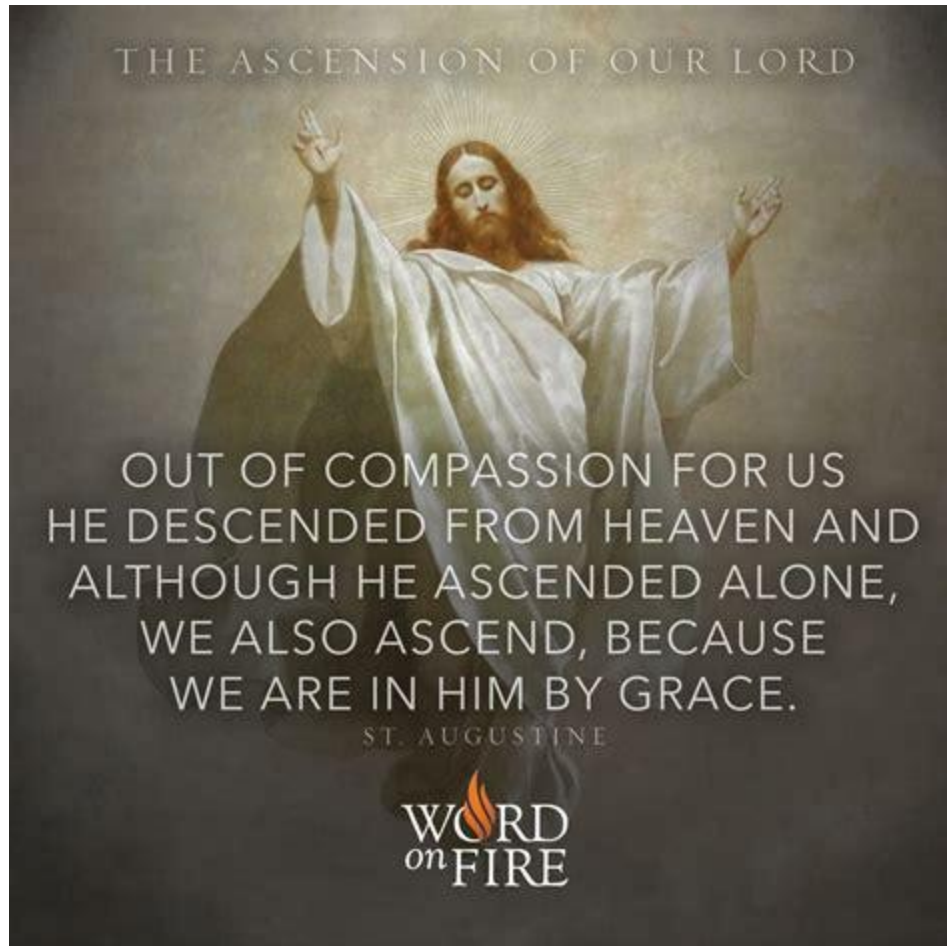


FROM FATHER JOHN: *“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”* (Matthew 28:19 – 20)



What is the feast of the Ascension about? The feast is about the Body. So, which Body? There are different bodies here on earth and there are different bodies in the heavenly kingdom, so, which body is it about? It's actually about two different bodies all at the same time.

The first body it's about is Christ's Body and our Body. Jesus Christ ascended into heaven and when he did, he took his human body and our human body up to heaven. The body of Christ, the human body of Jesus Christ was glorified and, in that glorification, He promises to give us glorified, heavenly bodies when we ascend to heaven. This is what Christian hope is all about. Christian hope is about the resurrection of our entire selves, body and soul. Christian hope is about the transformation of our entire selves in the heavenly kingdom. Christian hope is about the day when our bodies, our self, our complete being, will be elevated and transfigured.

That's the first body that the Ascension is about. But, what about the second body? I had a good friend in high school who was a great runner, he was the star on our high school track team. He went downstate as a freshman and as a sophomore and as a junior. But, senior year, he failed to qualify to go downstate in the mile by less than a foot. The top 5 in the regional went downstate and he finished in 6th place by less than a foot. The top 5 in his regional finished 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 at the state tournament. He also missed the state in the half mile as well.

But, all was not lost. He had another chance to qualify for state. It was in the 4-man one-mile relay. He was the first runner in the relay and he got the team a 15 yard lead. He passed the baton to the next runner who increased the lead by about 2 yards. Then the second runner passed the baton to the third runner who maintained the lead at about 17 yards. They were a cinch to make state until the third runner passed the baton to the fourth runner and they dropped it. With only one lap to go, with a huge lead, they dropped it and about 6 teams went flying past them while the fourth runner fumbled picking up the baton.

And, that is what the second body is all about. We are the Body of Christ in the world. In the letter to the Ephesians, St. Paul tells us, "And he put all things beneath his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of the one who fills all things in every way." (Ephesians 1:22 – 23) The Church, you, me, all of us, are the Body of Christ, we are "the fullness of the one who fills all things in every way." This is an awesome thing that, together, as Church, we are the fullness of Christ Jesus in the world.

You see, it's like the relay race, in the Ascension our Lord Jesus passes us the baton. He passes us the baton and makes us His instruments in the world. He gives us the honor and the privilege and the joy of completing the work He began here on earth. We get to cooperate in His saving work. We are given the great gift, the great opportunity, to continue our Lord Jesus' work of salvation but with this gift comes responsibility. All we have to do is not drop the baton.

In the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles it says, "While they were looking intently at the sky as he was going, suddenly two men dressed in white garments stood beside them. They said, 'Men of Galilee, why are you standing there looking at the sky?'" (Acts 1:10 – 11) They are giving us a mission, they are telling us to quit looking at the sky, go out and get to work building up the kingdom of God. Our Lord Jesus said to the disciples: 'Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature.'" (Mark 16:15) This is Jesus' last instruction to the disciples, it's his last instruction to each of us and in it he gives us our marching orders, he gives us our mission in life, he gives us a job to do, to proclaim, in everything we say, in everything we think, in everything we do, to proclaim the gospel to all the world.

May God Bless you and all those who love the Lord.