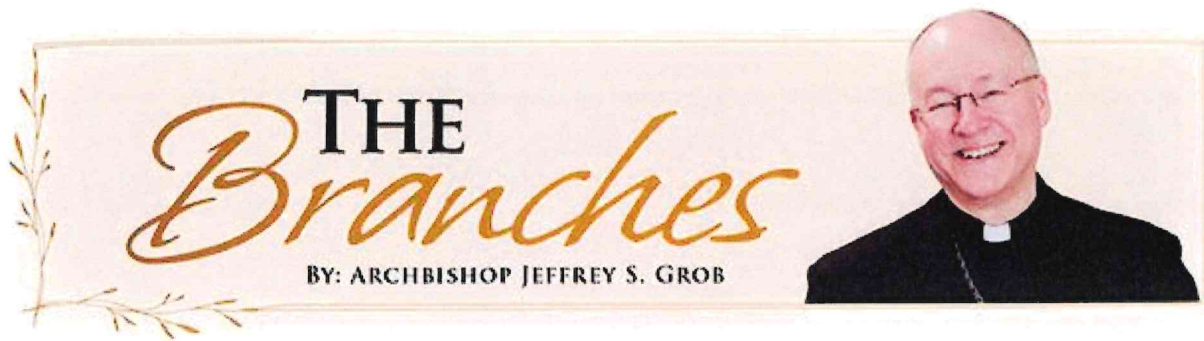




All you peoples, clap your hands; shout to God with joyful cries. For the Lord, the Most High, is to be feared, the great king over all the earth. (Psalm 47:2-3)

May 19, 2026

Hello Everyone —

In a way, the feast of the Ascension of the Lord is the ultimate homecoming party for all who courageously witness to the Lord.

In his collected homilies, Fr. Flor McCarthy, SDB, recounts a wide variety of stories and legends. Among them is found the following:

The story is told that when Jesus returned to heaven after his death and resurrection, the Archangel Gabriel was surprised to see him back so soon. And He still bore the wounds of the crucifixion. If you think about it, thirty-three years is not a long time, especially when you consider the importance and proportions of the task Jesus had been given to do.

"Back so soon?" Gabriel said to Jesus.

"Well, I would have stayed longer but they crucified me," Jesus replied.

"Oh, so they crucified you," said Gabriel. "That means you failed."

"Not necessarily," said Jesus. "You see, I called together a little group of disciples. They will carry on my work."

"And what if they should fail?" asked a frowning Gabriel. "Surely you have made other plans."

Jesus replied, "Gabriel, I haven't made any other plans. I'm counting on them."

Last Sunday, we were reminded of the plan as recorded by St. Matthew:

Then Jesus approached and said to them, "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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." (28:18-20)

Before leaving his apostles, Jesus commissioned them to preach the Gospel to all nations. He gave them a mandate to be his witnesses in the world — to continue rolling out the plan He began. And so it has been passed down to us. The task of preaching the Gospel to the world now depends upon you and me. WE are Christ's witnesses. It is a great privilege — but a daunting task.

The inherent beauty of the plan, fortunately, is that the disciples did not have to go it alone — nor do we. The Lord's Ascension prepares the way for Pentecost — for the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Advocate, who gives to all disciples exactly what we need to go out and preach — to heal — to love — in His Name. As a result, we are empowered. Jesus ascends not to escape us but to draw all things to Himself — to make room for the Holy Spirit and to draw us into his own unfolding plan — the ongoing work of redemption.

Let us prepare ourselves to be enlivened once again by the power of God's Spirit. Pentecost is soon upon us. Let us ask for the Advocate to renew and refresh us:

Holy Spirit, Lord divine.
Come, from heights of heav'n and shine,
Come with blessed radiance bright!
Come, O Father of the poor,
Come, whose treasured gifts endure,
Come, our heart's unfailing light!

Light most blessed, shine with grace
In our heart's most secret place,
Fill your faithful through and through!
Left without your presence here,
Life itself would disappear,
Nothing thrives apart from you!

As I do for you, please pray for me,

Most Reverend Jeffrey S. Grob
Archbishop of Milwaukee

