

Ascension Homily-2023: “It’s better for you that I go”

Today’s reading tells us, how and where the ascension happened, and what does it mean to us today. Therefore, our reflection will focus on:

1. Why Christ, after resurrection spent 40 days before his ascension?
2. What are the reasons for Christ’s ascension into heaven?
3. What are the spiritual implications of his ascension in our life.

Jesus ascended from mount Olivet: (Ascension Rock on mount of olives)
There are two ways of understanding: ordinary sense and spiritual sense.

-it can be similar to the take off of a flight or a bird. But unfortunately, that is not what is intended. It means, *Jesus’s entry into eternal glory.*

Then, why Jesus spent 40 days between his Resurrection and Ascension? 40 is a symbolic number that signifies preparation and purification. Jesus appeared many times to his disciples, to prepare them and purify their faith, because after his ascension, they are left alone, so he would commission them to spread the good news of Salvation as recorded in the gospel today.

The three reasons for Christ’s ascension:

1. *To send us an advocate/paraclete/helper:*
-Jn 16.7: It is better for you that I go, because if I do not go, the advocate will not come to you. Jesus also instructed the disciples to stay waiting until the holy spirit come upon them at Pentecost.
2. *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. following his way.
3. To be absent physically from us, but to experience *his perpetual presence spiritually in our life.*

Today's gospel assures to his followers, his perpetual presence until the end of time, after his ascension into heaven. There are two occasions the disciples experienced his absence: his death on the cross and his ascension. But he assured his presence in another form, namely in the form of the Holy Spirit, that was to be sent ten days later, on Pentecost. His other presence is in the form of Holy Eucharist, and his living Word.

Here we can borrow, St Paul's image of the church as "body of Christ". Our head is in heaven and our body-the church is here on earth. Therefore, on the last day, he will come to take the whole church-as the body to be united with him, the head.

With certainty, we can be convinced that Christ, who ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father, is present in our Christian life, and he intercedes for us.

Finally, what are the implications of Christ's ascension today in our spiritual life?

Matthew tells us: After ascension, the disciples were commissioned to continue the mission of Jesus: to make disciples of all nations, to baptize in the name of the Trinity. In short, Christ's ascension asks us to continue his work, his mission, of loving and serving, from where he left us. You do not have to know everything perfectly about faith to share it.

To conclude: Christ's Ascension is his entry into eternal glory, glory of the Father; he ascended because of 3 reasons explained above. May we experience him in his life-giving Word, his presence in the Eucharist, and in the action of the Holy Spirit. Let's earnestly wait, like the apostles, to receive the fulness of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, we celebrate next Sunday. Amen! Have a blessed Ascension Sunday!

Ascension Joke?

One Sunday at Mass as the priest was giving his homily, a little baby in the front row suddenly started crying loudly. The mother did her best to pacify the child, but nothing worked. So finally, she got up and started to walk down the aisle to take the baby into the crying room. The priest stopped his preaching, and very compassionately called out to the mother, "That's OK! You don't have to leave. The child is not disturbing me." The young woman turned around and said, "*No, sorry Father, but you're disturbing my child!*"