

Ascension Sunday May 28, 2017: Jn 16:16-20:

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 after commanding them to bear witness to him by their lives and by preaching throughout the world. But the ascended Jesus is still with us through the 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' glory after his suffering and death – a glory in which we also hope to share.

In his Last Supper discourse, Jesus tells his Apostles about leaving them in order to return to his Father and about coming again at the end of time to usher in the new age of God's kingdom. When they start asking each other the meaning of his statement, Jesus explains to them the hardships they will have to face after his departure and the glorious reward waiting for them in his Second Coming. But as he had consoled them earlier, promising to send a Paraclete, now Jesus assures them that his absence is only temporary.

A little while: Jesus is speaking about a three-level disappearance and reappearance. The first level is his death and Resurrection. The apostles will not see him when he dies. But they will see him again in three days as their risen Lord. The second level is the mystical level: They will lose sight of him physically when he ascends to the glory of the Father. But they will see him again in many ways by Faith, when the Holy Spirit comes. There is also a third level. Jesus is not now visible physically to the world, but will manifest his glory to the whole world when he comes again in glory. In the light of eternity, a few thousand years are but an instant, a very short while.

1) Let us try to recognize the presence of the living Lord in our midst here and now. 2) Let us ask Him to help us adjust our daily lives accordingly, so that we, too, may inherit the eternal joy prepared for us.

1) We need to be proclaimers and evangelizers: 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. Let us ask the guidance of the Holy Spirit to bear witness to Jesus by our transparent Christian lives.

2) We have a teaching mission: Jesus taught us lessons of Faith, Hope, Love, forgiveness, mercy and salvation by his life and preaching and gave us the mission to teach these to others. Hence, let us learn about Jesus and his teachings by our daily study of the Bible and the teachings of the Church, experience him in personal prayer, reception of the Sacraments and works of charity, and, with the help of his Holy Spirit, convey to others Jesus whom we have experienced.

3) The ascended Jesus is our source of strength and encouragement: We will be able to overcome doubts about our Faith and baseless fears, anxieties and worries by meditating on Jesus' Ascension and the lesson it teaches that we, too, are called to share Jesus' glory in Heaven.)

The Ascension walk-out: There was a long-winded pastor who preached salvation history from Genesis to Revelation in every sermon. On the feast of Ascension as he reached Isaiah, he remarked that the prophet said nothing about the Ascension of Our Lord. He asked his audience, "What shall we do with him?" One old man in the front seat said, "He can have my seat, Father, I am leaving."