

## **The Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord: Show the World that Jesus Lives**

The disciples climbed the hill in Galilee and saw the Lord being taken up into heaven. There were eleven disciples at this point. Judas Iscariot had dropped out of school, society and life. His replacement, Matthias had not yet been chosen. So just eleven disciples were there. And Jesus. Jesus was there, but some still doubted.

I find that strangely comforting that some of them doubted. If these people could doubt after all their experiences of the Lord, then there is nothing wrong with me or my faith when I have questions and doubts. I am only acting like a human being.

Jesus gave the disciples a mandate and a promise. The mandate was to go, make disciples of all nations, baptize them in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all that I have commanded you. The promise was that they would not do this alone: "Know that I am with you always, until the end of the age." Matthew 28:20.

There are angels in today's first reading. They appear standing with the disciples as the disciples stare at Jesus ascending into heaven. They say to the disciples and to us: "Men of Galilee, men and women of the New Israel, men and women of the Church, why are you looking up? Men and women of Galilee, men and women of the New Israel, men and women of the Church, don't look at the sky. And don't turn into yourselves. Don't be contemplating your navels. No, get to work. Others need to know about the heights and depths of God's working in our lives."

And so we are told to tell the world that Jesus lives. "Know that I am with you always." The Solemnity of the Ascension is a call for us to tell the world that Jesus is still with us.

How do we do this? How do we proclaim Christ in our everyday lives? Simply by utilizing the gifts the Lord has given us. Here are a few suggestions:

Are you a mother or father, a husband or wife? God has given you the gift to be the way to Him for your spouse through your marriage. Your spouse needs to see that Jesus lives through you. Parents are given the responsibility and the joy of raising children for God. You parents are the first teachers of your children in faith. Your best lessons are the ones your children witness when they see how Mom and Dad treat each others, treat them and treat others with the charity and kindness of Jesus Christ.

Do you make friends easily? Then, befriend those who are alone in the world. Perhaps that loner in school, that elderly man in his apartment, that cousin no one talks to, perhaps they and many others need to know that they are not alone. Your friendship can help them understand their value before the Lord.

Do you multitask well? Are you one of those people who can do three things at

once, while texting in the background. Then use your talent to do things for others. How can you say you are too busy? You have the ability to be busy doing the Lord's work while you are still doing your normal projects. Some people can't even go from one thing to another. But you can. Fill your day in giving witness to Jesus. Be loving and caring. Show the world that Jesus lives.

Do you have a particular expertise that can help others? Are you a teacher, a lawyer, a doctor, a nurse, a paramedic, or one of the many other service professionals? Well, stop seeing people as paying customers and start seeing them as people sent to you so you can use your expertise to help them find God. Perhaps a teacher can tutor a sick child, or the member of a medical profession can volunteer in a clinic, or a lawyer can give advise to the impoverished, all making it very clear that they are treasured by God. That's how you can show them that Jesus lives.

Are you really good with your hands? Does carpentry come easy to you? Well, you have skill. Have you ever considered volunteering for an organization like Habitat for humanity? How about fixing things? Are you good at that? Do you have any idea how much you are needed by the elderlh trying their best to stay in their homes and not knowing what to do when something breaks. Check in on them. Fix things for free, and let them know that Jesus lives. Perhaps, if you are good with cars, you can help a neighbor get back onto the road.

Do you have a determination within you to serve the country? Your fellow citizens need you. American needs soldiers and sailors, air force and now space force people. If you decided to serve, then serve not just your country but your God. Bring the presence of God into the military with you. Show others the virtue of fortitude, courage. But do this treating all with charity. That way they will see that your real strength is in your Christian character.

Do you like traveling? Does the thought of going off to exotic lands excite you? Then consider volunteering to help the poor in Haiti, the Caribbean, Central America, Africa or Asia, or, perhaps, traveling within the U.S. to the poor in Appalachia. Let others know that you are happy to undertake a journey to them if it helps them take a step closer to God. That's how you can tell the world that Jesus lives.

Does your heart go out for the poor? This is a gift. Have you ever thought of volunteering at a soup kitchen, or a homeless shelter? Let these people know that you are with them because Jesus Christ cares for them.

Perhaps you are convinced that you need to do something that is not all that comfortable for you. Maybe you feel that you are called to jail or prison ministry even though jails and prisons frighten you. But, you think, there are people there who have the time to look closely at their lives and conform their lives not just to society, but to God. Or maybe you have considered spending time with people in the last days of their lives. But the thought of being with a dying person upsets you. Still, you know you can do it, and you have to do it. Remember, the Lord came to comfort the afflicted

and afflict the comfortable. He often calls us out of our comfort zone. So, go out and do it! Tell the world that Jesus lives.

People are led to the Lord by other people, people who give witness to the living presence of Jesus Christ by their actions. People are led to the Lord by people like us who stop gazing up into the sky and go out to show the world that Jesus lives.