

ASCENSION OF OUR LORD JESUS, JUNE 1, 2025:

“And you shall be my witnesses”

The Gospel of Luke (Luke 24: 46-53) “Jesus said to his disciples: “This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.” When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God. (Luke 24: 46-53)

What does ‘Ascension’ mean for us today? Jesus Christ had completed the work of our redemption, that is, suffering, death, and Resurrection. He had selected and trained His apostles. His work on earth is technically accomplished and He is ready to go to the Father and leave His work in the hands of these men and women. Jesus promised to send the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, to help His disciples carry on His mission throughout the world (Acts 2:33) by their lives and preaching. Their source of power will be the Holy Spirit. “I am with you always; yes, to the end of time”. Ascension is a celebration of Jesus’ final glorification after his suffering, death, and Resurrection – a glory in which we, too, hope to share.

The first reading (Acts 1:1-11) gives an account of the event of the Ascension as recorded in the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. First, Jesus instructed his apostles to remain in Jerusalem and wait for the baptism by the Holy Spirit so that they might become his “witnesses to the ends of the earth” by the power of the Holy Spirit. Then a cloud took Jesus from the sight of the disciples and two heavenly messengers in white garments gave them the assurance of Jesus’ “second coming” or return in glory. In the second reading, St Paul explains the theological meaning of Jesus’ exaltation, giving us the assurance that one day, we, too, will be ascending to Heavenly Glory, provided we fulfill the mission entrusted to us by the ascending Lord. The Gospel of Luke (24:46-53) describes how Jesus ascended to Heaven after giving his final blessing and missionary command to **“proclaim the Good News to the whole creation,” “to be his witnesses,” and “to make disciples of all nations.”** (Mk 16:15-20, Lk 24:46-53, Acts 1:1-11).

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A beautiful old story tells of how Jesus, after his Ascension into Heaven, was surrounded by the holy angels who began to enquire about his work on earth. Jesus told them about his birth, life,

preaching, death and Resurrection, and how he had accomplished the salvation of the world. The angel Gabriel asked, “Well, now that you are back in Heaven, who will continue your work on earth?” Jesus said, “While I was on earth, I gathered a group of people around me who believed in me and loved me. They will continue to spread the Gospel and carry on the work of the Church.” Gabriel was perplexed. “You mean Peter, who denied you three times, and all the rest who ran away when you were crucified? You mean to tell us that you left them to carry on your work? And what will you do if this plan doesn’t work?” Jesus said, “I have no other plan - it must work.” Indeed, Jesus has no other plan than to rely on the grace-assisted efforts of his followers.

(1) “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

(2) “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” (Mt 28:19-21).

(3) “Go into all the world and proclaim the Good News to the whole creation” (Mk 16:15).

(4) **Bishop Flemming picked up this divine mandate** as his episcopal motto, believing strongly that all believers are called and commissioned by Christ to “**Go Make Disciples.**”

Bringing Jesus to all – young and old; to the homebound (in the Holy Eucharist), is our **collective task**. ***St Pius X presents true north VBS, June 23-27, 2025.*** Whether you participate, help to serve as station or crew leaders, it will be fun and faith. At True North VBS, can you help the kids to discover and trust Jesus in a wild world?

Matthew, Mark, Luke and the Acts of the Apostles make it clear that Jesus’ message of God’s love should go to all the world. ***We must never ignore the worldwide scope of the Good News. God wants all the world to hear the message of salvation.*** We are to tell and re-tell the story of Jesus’ life, suffering, death, resurrection, ascension, and sending of the Holy Spirit. There is a difference between preaching and proclaiming. We preach with words, but we proclaim with our lives. The ascended Jesus is our source of strength, encouragement, and hope. He also gives us the grace to overcome our doubts, baseless fears, anxieties, and worries. Amen.

Happy feast of Ascension of the Lord, to everyone.

Fr. Martin Ezeihuaku, MSP.

