

## **You Shall Be My Witnesses.**

Today we celebrate the Ascension of our Lord into heaven, the Second Glorious Mystery. Jesus' ascension into heaven is different from the taken-up into heaven of Enoch- the father of Methuselah (Gen. 5: 24, Sirach 44: 16) and Elijah (2Kg 2:11-12). The two did not die but were taken into heaven as a special privilege. Jesus in his case suffered, died, resurrected, and stayed in flesh for more than 40 days before ascending into heaven where he seats at the right hand of the Father, from where he will come again to judge the living and the dead.

Jesus staying behind for more than 40 days before his ascension was very significant. He built the community of the disciples into the community of witnesses to the truth built in his resurrection because he knew very well that without witnesses there will be no witness. Thus, he told them "You shall be my witnesses..." The disciples did not disappoint him in this case as they disappointed him during his passion. The events of the Acts of the Apostles we have been reading since this season of Easter prove this without doubt.

We are the disciples of our time. Jesus calls: "You shall be my witnesses." He spoke to his first disciples face to face because he was physically present to them. He is also present with us and his presence as the Church teaches us is seen in his word, the gathered assembly, in each of us and in the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist, the Sacraments of the Sacraments. At the end of each celebration, we are all commissioned to "go" as Christ commissioned his disciples today. We are called to go and live out what we have celebrated. In the Eucharist we celebrate the love of God, the forgiveness, peace of God and we acknowledge our unworthiness. All these invite us to be the vanguards of God's love, forgiveness, and peace we have received.

We become true witnesses to the resurrected Christ by our efforts to live what we celebrate in the Eucharist. We ask ourselves how our weekly encounter or daily encounters make us true witnesses in our words and deeds. We remember that what matters most is not how many times we go to Church or pray but how we allow these encounters to influence our daily lives- the way we treat and talk to people in our families, places of work, and in our different worshipping communities. Let us pray that as we prepare the feast of Pentecost next Sunday that the gifts of the Holy Spirit will help us to strive to live life worthy of our Christian vocation and the Sacraments we celebrate.

***"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit, fruit that will last--and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you"***  
***(John 15:16)***