

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. Instead, they were taken into heaven as a special privilege. Jesus, in his case, suffered, died, resurrected, and stayed in the flesh for more than 40 days before ascending into heaven, where he sits at the right hand of the Father, from where he will come again to judge the living and the dead. Both our first reading from Acts of the Apostles and the Gospel of St. Luke, describe the events of the Ascension of the Lord.

Jesus stayed behind for more than 40 days before his ascension, which was very significant. He built the community of the disciples into the community of witnesses to the truth made in his resurrection because he knew very well that there would be no witness without witnesses. 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.

We are the disciples of our time. Jesus calls: "You shall be my witnesses." He spoke to his first disciple's face to face because he was physically present to them. Jesus remains present with us. His presence is in his Word we read, the gathered assembly, in each of us, and the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist, the Sacraments of the Sacraments. We are all commissioned to "go" as Christ commissioned his disciples today at the end of each celebration. Jesus invites us to go and live out what we have celebrated. In the Eucharist, we celebrate the love of God, the forgiveness, and the 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 faithful witnesses to the resurrected Christ by our efforts to live what we celebrate in the Eucharist. We ask ourselves how our weekly encounters or daily encounters make us faithful witnesses in our words and deeds. Also, we must 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. Let us pray that as we prepare the feast of Pentecost next Sunday, the Holy Spirit's gifts will help us strive to live a 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)***