

## *Ascension of the Lord*

When I was growing up, our parents organized all family holiday dinners. As the six of us kids became adults, we still enjoyed going to our parents' home for big events. But as our parents became infirm, someone else had to get us organized. Nowadays we gather in the home of either one brother or one sister because they have the patience and the generosity to provide the hospitality we need. When our parents stepped aside, somebody else had to step in.

When Jesus ascended into heaven, somebody had to step in to continue his ministry. At first, the disciples stood there watching him rise into the sky. They may have thought, "This isn't a good idea. How is Jesus going to spread his message if he leaves?" Indeed.

Luke describes the event this way: "a cloud took [Jesus] from their sight." In the Old Testament, Moses entered a cloud when he ascended Mount Sinai to receive the commandments. Elijah prayed during a drought and a raincloud appeared. In the gospels Jesus predicted that the Son of Man would come in glory on a cloud. When he ascended into a cloud, two men suddenly appeared in white garments. Luke doesn't tell us their names, but earlier at the Transfiguration, Jesus appeared in a cloud with two men in white who are identified: one is Moses; the other is Elijah.

Two men in white garments also appeared right after the resurrection of Jesus. They spoke to the women who came to the tomb. "Why do you seek the living one among the dead?" they asked. Well, they went to the tomb because that's where they left Jesus. But the witnesses tell them, "He is not here, but he has been raised." They were looking in the wrong place.

At the ascension, two men dressed in white ask the disciples a similar question: "Why are you standing there looking at the sky?" Well, they are looking at the sky because that's where Jesus just went. Just as the tomb was the wrong place for the women to look, so the sky was the wrong place for the disciples to look. They shouldn't have looked up for the presence of Christ. They should have looked around. If Jesus was going to spread his message, he wasn't going to do it from up there. He does it around here - with us.

A lot of times we think somebody ought to do something to make the world a better place. Many times that somebody is us. We may be surprised to find out we have the gifts that others need. At times someone in our families or a coworker can no longer perform what we counted on them to do. You may have wondered how will the family go on? How will our work get done? And then someone steps up and fills the shoes that were left behind. Sometimes that person does not realize that he or she has the abilities to help out, and everyone else discovers that this person can actually do a better job than what was done before.

The Ascension of Jesus probably surprised the disciples. But because he left, they stepped in, and the gospel spread even farther. My brothers and sisters, Jesus has ascended. What is God asking you to do? Sometimes you can find the answer by listening to yourself complain that somebody ought to do something. That somebody might be you.

Sunday, May 17, 2015

### **First Communion homily**

**[Bryan and Dominic, Mariana, Alejandra, Jessica, Alondra, Bryan and Brian]**  
we are all excited that you are going to make your first communion today. We love you, and we have wanted to share with you something that is important to us, communion with the body and blood of our Savior and friend, Jesus Christ.

I like to spend time with my friends, and I'm sure you do too. Sometimes I eat with my friends. Sometimes we go hear music. Or we go to a baseball game. We like to talk to each other. We like being together. You can stay friends with people without actually being with them, but being with friends is the best way to stay friends.

Jesus made good friends with his disciples. He was their Savior, but he was also their friend. He ate with them. He went fishing with them. They took walks. They talked a lot.

When Jesus died, the disciples lost their best friend. But Jesus did something totally amazing. He found a way to be with them.

Today we celebrate the Ascension of the Lord. After Jesus died, he rose from the tomb. For forty days he appeared to his disciples and talked to them again. Then, "as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him from their sight." He left them, but he stayed with them in other ways.

The most important way that Jesus stays with us today is in communion. The same Jesus who walked and talked with his friends comes to us in the sacrament of holy communion. If you want to be a good Catholic, you will want to be a good friend of Jesus. You are his friend in the same way you enjoy other friends. You spend time with him. You talk to him. You listen for him. You carry him in your heart. And each Sunday, when we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus, you come here to receive his body and blood in communion.

Parents and godparents, I urge you to be good examples for these children. You are friends with Jesus. These children look up to you. Do not disappoint them. Let them know that your friendship with Christ is sincere, and that you share faithfully in the sacraments of the church. These children cannot get here alone. They need you to fulfill their pledge to Christ. See that they are here every Sunday. You love Christ; you wouldn't be here if you didn't. Show these children you love Christ in the sacraments of the church. Being with friends is the best way to be friends. Jesus wants friendship with each of you. He wants your time. He wants communion with you.

Children, again, we are very excited to share this day with you. You have worked hard to get ready, and now the day is here. Today you will share with us our very best friend, our Savior Jesus Christ.