

Ascension Sunday

Homily: Fr. Shijo George

Pastor – Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Victoria, BC, Canada

We have an intercessor in Heaven: Jesus, the Word who became flesh; lived among humans; died; was buried; resurrected; and finally ascended into heaven, complete in body and soul.

Christ's Ascension is a perennial and integral part of our faith. In the Creed, we pronounce our great faith in the Ascension of the Lord: "He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty." With the Ascension, a new chapter begins in the Disciples' lives. Now is the time for them to live and to give testimony to what they have experienced and witnessed, after walking and living with Jesus. The Disciples were asked by Jesus to remain in prayer, in the hope of receiving the Holy Spirit; and through this, a total change was going to happen in their lives and ministry.

Speaking about transformative change and spiritual enlightenment, once, a Seeker asked a Guru: "What did you do before enlightenment?" "I was collecting firewood and drawing water." the Guru replied. "Now that you are enlightened, what do you do?" The teacher responded: "I am collecting firewood and drawing water." Doubtful and confused, the Seeker asked: "Aren't they the same? Is there no difference? Did you not feel any difference after enlightenment?" The Guru replied: "The difference is not in my work, it is within me. My perspective and attitude to life have completely changed. I have changed."

This is reflected in the Angels' question to the Disciples of Jesus: "Why do you stand looking up toward heaven?" It was an invitation for the Disciples to change their attitudes, to be strong in their call, and to be active in the ministry of Jesus to which they were called.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church, quoting Romans 14, teaches us that "Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living." Christ's Ascension into heaven signifies his participation in humanity, in God's power, and in God's authority. Jesus Christ is Lord. He possesses all power in heaven and on earth. He is "far



above all rule and authority and power and dominion" for the Father "has put all things under his feet" (Ephesians 1:21, 22). Christ is Lord of the cosmos and of history. In Him human history and, indeed, all creation are "set forth" and transcendently fulfilled" (CCC § 668) "To him was given dominion and glory and kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom is one that shall not be destroyed" (Daniel 7:14). After this event, the Apostles became witnesses of the "kingdom [that] will have no end".

As God, Jesus is with us always. He is present in the Eucharist and in all the Sacraments. In Matthew (18:20), we read the assurance: "For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them." And so, whenever we gather in church and in our homes, let us feel Him in our sacramental worship and in our lives. He is preparing the eternal home for us in His Eternal Kingdom. Let us then be sincere and devoted followers who walk in hope, love, and trust in our Ascended Lord.