

# SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

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Ascension: one of the most important event in the life of Jesus.

- It's in the creeds, so that every time we profess the most basic essence of the Christian faith, we include the fact that He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
- But why is it so important? What does it really mean for us?

Doesn't mean that Jesus did what He came to do and just left, that we'll see Him again at the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming.

- In the Easter season, we've been revisiting the Last Supper, where Jesus assures the disciples that that's not the case.
- Matthew, Mark, and Luke share Jesus' promise of the specific presence of His Body and Blood in the Eucharist, while John focuses on describing Jesus abiding with us and living His own divine life in us.

Then this AM, we heard Luke's intro for the Acts of the Apostles, where he describes his gospel as dealing with all that Jesus *began* to do and teach, until the time he was taken up.

- Not all that Jesus did and taught, but what he *began* to do and teach
- Purpose of the Acts of the Apostles is to tell us what He did and taught *after* he was taken up,
- And how He's acting and teaching *now*.

The Ascension is so important because it's what makes all this possible.

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Jesus goes so He can send the HS, which we'll receive next week at Pentecost – but why does He need to do that?

- Because the restoration of Creation doesn't mean just the triumph over sin and death, or else the gospels might have ended with Jesus coming out of the tomb and saying, "Game over, I win."
- God's purpose in Creation was to give us place to encounter God and find our greatest good in becoming his children.

So think about it this way: Imagine that I buy a fixer-upper and decide that I'm going to use my children as my work crew.

- NOT, the fastest, easiest, most effective way to complete the project.
- BUT, it is the *best* way for kids to experience the joy of work, satisfaction of seeing the transformation, knowing the freedom that comes from having those skills,
- Basically, it's the best way for them become contractors themselves.

In the same way, God cherishes our dignity enough to make the salvation of the world and everyone in it dependent on us.

- So, after making our participation possible with a lot of doing and teaching of His own, at the Ascension Jesus doesn't *leave* the project, He steps back.
- He's still with us, but now He's explaining the plans, teaching the skills, directing resources.
- And by the grace of the HS the analogy of the fixer-upper holds up even better since my kids are 4 and not quite 2, because that almost captures the reality of the project.

But now that Jesus has stepped back, we have to step up, and Fr. Walter Ciszek described that this way:

It's not true to say that Jesus doesn't need us to save the world – He *does* need us.

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- He needs you and me — our bodies, our lives, our hearts, our souls, and our love — to live among men today, to save those men by his healing, holy presence.
- He needs to touch the world with your hands and walk the world with your feet and look upon the world with your eyes,
- and talk to the world with your lips, and love the world with your hearts, and save the world again today in you and with you, and because of you.

That means that people will not encounter Christ in us if we're not sincerely seeking holiness in our daily lives.

- Every deliberate sin, act of meanness or uncharity hides His presence so that people will not see Christ in us.
- Every angry or petty remark muffles His voice.

If that seems startling or frightening, good – salvation is serious business – but don't believe the lie that you're not up to the challenge.

- No matter how unworthy you might feel, in the eyes of Almighty God we are the greatest, most marvelous, most sacred work of his hands, because we carry his Son in our lives.
- We are Christ bearers...

At this very moment, though you cannot feel him, or see him, or touch him, his life throbs vibrantly in your life, in your soul, in your heart.

- The things you touch, he touches. The things you look upon, he looks upon; the words you speak, he speaks; he is with you in everything you do, except sin.

As you prepare to receive Jesus in the Eucharist especially, think about the power that He's bringing into your life.

- For now, don't worry about some huge transformation or doing some great act of devotion.
- He's with you in every step, every look, every word, and every touch,

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- so start small and just think about the rest of today:
- Will you demand? Or will you offer?
- Will you take? Or will you give?
- Will you grumble? Or will you comfort?
- Will you encourage? Or will you groan?

Out of His great love for us, Jesus has stepped back – now will you step up?

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