

May 16, 2021

Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord

Acts 1:1-11

Eph 1:17-23 or Eph 4:1-13 or 4:1-7, 11-13

Mk 16:15-20

GROW: “Why are you standing there looking at the sky?” the Apostles are asked. Well, hello! The risen Jesus, who had once again walked among the Apostles, “was lifted up, and a cloud took him from their sight.” Of course the disciples would look up, to gaze once more upon the Son of God whom they loved. Today’s feast reminds us, however, that to look for Jesus is not to stand around looking up, but to engage with others in the world in which he remains present. Even as he sits “at the right hand of God,” Jesus dwells among and within us. For God is not some distant figure, but One who desires to walk alongside us in the person of his Son, Jesus, and give us the gift of the Holy Spirit as our help and advocate. Even in times when we experience doubt, complacency, or simply feel distant from God, Jesus is at our side. Once we open our hearts to his presence, we cannot help but share the Good News of God’s love in our families, workplaces, and everyday encounters with others.

GO: For anyone wishing to grow in their understanding of what evangelization looks like, today’s readings offer as good a playbook as any. As we celebrate the Ascension, we may be tempted to see it as a kind of “farewell party” for Jesus. But while on the surface, it may appear that Jesus “left” the Apostles, he promises to remain with them through the gift of the Holy Spirit. What does that mean for us? Today’s Gospel sums it up, quoting Jesus’ words immediately before he was taken up to heaven: “Go into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature.” As Catholics and Christians, that’s our bottom line. I read somewhere that “proclaim” goes beyond mere words, and encompasses living out the Gospel by sharing God’s love. Jesus remains at our side, encouraging us to use the gifts God has given us to build up the Church.

PRAY: Today’s feast reminds us that we have an advocate in Jesus and the Holy Spirit. As you enter a challenging situation or even just a typical day, remember to ask Jesus to give you a “spirit of wisdom.”