

Ascension Sunday

A preacher found three little boys sitting on a curb playing hooky from school. "Don't you want to go to heaven?" he admonished them. "I sure do," two of the boys answered, but the third replied, "No sir." "What's the matter? You mean you don't want to go to heaven when you die?" "Oh, when I die!" exclaimed the youngster. "Of course I do, when I die. I thought you were getting up a crowd to go now."

Dear Friends,

Think about some of these significant moments in our life. When our children first moved out of the house for college. A spouse goes into the army leaving behind two children with the remaining spouse. When our parents passed away. These are moments when we typically feel good, bad, happy or sad. They are mixed feelings that make our lives memorable.

The Ascension of the Lord is both an ending and a beginning. It is the end of the Lord being present on earth in his humanity. It is also, the beginning of his entry into glory where he is seated at the right hand of the Father (as we profess in the creed). It is the end of the twelve Apostles being able to rely on Jesus physically in their midst. It is a saying of good-bye to the Apostles. It is also the beginning of the twelve Apostles being instruments for the growth of the church through the Holy Spirit.

The first reading from the Act of the Apostles gives a nutshell picture of what happened in Jesus' life and what will happen in the Apostle's lives. We hear from the reading, "you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you will be my witnesses starting from Jerusalem to the end of the world." The Apostles became the witnesses for Jesus to the whole world.

In the Gospel we hear that Jesus said to the Apostles to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high. Though they were sad, the Apostles returned to Jerusalem with great joy and constant praise of God in the temple. God has promised to send them the Holy Spirit to strengthen them in their mission.

It was through our Baptism and Confirmation; we are clothed and sealed by the power of the Holy Spirit. When Jesus left, he gave them the mission to be witnesses starting from Jerusalem to the end of the world. They were the ones carrying Jesus' mission to the end of the world. Today it's our primary duty to be the witnesses for Jesus' Mission.

Today as followers of Jesus, we are to carry out His mission from Waupaca throughout Wisconsin and to the world. We could also say we are to carry out His mission from our

Church to our homes, to our families throughout our social circles and extended family, to our places of work and school. It should always pass from the place of worship to homes and then beyond.

Sometimes when we are physically present with each other, we cannot give each other what we need to and we must go away, at least for a time. Sometimes only our absence can deepen and cleanse our presence. Sometimes it is better that we go away, for a day or for a season. That is part of the mystery, the theology, and the psychology of the Ascension. Although Christ is no longer present with us in His humanity, His spirit is upon us.

So let us be strengthened by the Holy Spirit to carry out our mission. St. Theresa of Avila says, "Christ has no body now on Earth but yours, no hands but yours, no feet but yours; yours are the eyes through which to look out at Christ's compassion to the world, yours are the feet with which he is to go about doing good and yours are the hands with which he is to bless us now."

Questions for Reflections:

How can I be a witness to Jesus' Mission through this church?

How do I carry out Jesus' mission in my family and pass it to different families in the world?