

Theme: **CALLED TO WITNESS, EMPOWERED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT!**
Ascension Sunday, 17 May 2026

Good day, everyone!

Seven weeks ago, we celebrated Easter — the Feast of the Resurrection. Next Sunday, we'll celebrate Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came down upon the apostles. And today, we celebrate the Feast of the Ascension, when Jesus returned to His Father in heaven.

The Resurrection, the Ascension, and Pentecost aren't separate stories. They're different facets of one great mystery of our redemption. The Risen Christ has gone back to the Father, sent down His Spirit to the apostles, and now reigns as Lord of heaven and earth. That means exactly what St. Paul wrote: **THE FATHER HAS PLACED ALL THINGS BENEATH HIS FEET** (Eph 1:22).

If we look closely at the Ascension accounts in the Gospels — John doesn't include one — we'll notice each evangelist highlights something different. Luke and Mark present the Ascension as a farewell. Jesus is lifted up, taken by a cloud — that ancient sign of God's presence — and exalted in the Father's glory.

Matthew, however, frames it as a mission sending (Mt 28:16-20). And the setting he chooses tells us why that matters so much to him. Remember, God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses on a mountain. Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, preached the Sermon on the Mount, and was transfigured on a mountain — all turning points in His mission. Now, His Ascension happens on a mountain too.

Matthew, writing for Jewish Christians, wanted them to catch that "mountain" connection. His point is clear: the Eleven, and those who come after them, are entrusted with continuing Jesus' mission "until the end of the age."

Who were the Eleven? They were the ones Jesus personally called. For three years they walked with Him, listened to His words, watched His deeds, received private instructions, witnessed His death and resurrection, and would soon receive the Holy Spirit.

For Matthew, everything before the Ascension was preparation for this moment. Among the four evangelists, it's Matthew who shows us how deliberately Jesus taught His apostles what discipleship meant and formed them for what was coming. He was preparing them for the day they would take over from where He would leave off.

That's why, in Matthew's account, Jesus could say to the Eleven with full confidence: ***"Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."***

With the Ascension, the baton is passed to the apostles. And their mission is staggering. Because the Father has placed **“all things beneath Jesus’ feet”** — meaning He has given Him total authority over the universe — their mission is universal too: “Make disciples of all nations.”

And to carry this out, Jesus gave them a promise: **“Behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”** He fulfilled that promise by sending the Holy Spirit after His Ascension. For John, the Spirit is the abiding presence of Jesus on earth. So, the same Jesus remains with them, and with their successors, through His Spirit.

That happened two thousand years ago. But the task of proclaiming the Good News hasn’t ended. It passes on, generation after generation. And now it’s our turn — in union with the Pope and our bishops, the successors of Peter and the apostles.

Like the apostles, we don’t have to be afraid or shrink back from this responsibility. The Holy Spirit is with us, the Advocate, the Spirit the Father will send in Jesus’ name. “He will teach you everything and remind you of all that I have told you” (Jn 14:26).

Yes, our mission today looks different from the apostles’. But the goal is the same: **TO MAKE CHRIST KNOWN SO THAT OTHERS, TOO, MAY ACCEPT HIM AS LORD AND SAVIOR AND RECEIVE THE ETERNAL SALVATION HE PROMISED.**

That could be anyone — someone in our family, a neighbor, a stranger, someone who has never heard of Jesus.

AND HERE’S THE TRUTH WE MUST NEVER FORGET THROUGH BAPTISM, WE BELONG TO A CHURCH THAT IS MISSIONARY BY NATURE. OUR BAPTISM MAKES US MISSIONARIES. IT MEANS WE’RE CALLED TO PASS ON THE FAITH WE’VE RECEIVED — THROUGH OUR PRAYERS, OUR WORDS, AND THE WAY WE LIVE — SO THAT OTHERS, LIKE US, MAY COME TO BELIEVE, FOLLOW JESUS’ TEACHINGS, AND BE SAVED. AMEN.