

## **THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD YEAR A**

Acts 1:1-11, Ephesians 1: 17-23 and Mathew 28: 16-20

My dear brothers and sisters,

Today we celebrate the great feast of the Ascension of the Lord. At first glance, the Ascension may seem like a moment of departure—Jesus leaving His disciples and returning to the Father. But in reality, it is not a goodbye; it is a new beginning.

The Ascension reminds us that Christ is not absent. He is present in a new way—through His Spirit, through the Church, and through the mission He entrusts to us.

In the first reading from Acts, Jesus spends forty days with His disciples after the Resurrection. He teaches them and prepares them for what lies ahead. Before ascending, He tells them: “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses.”

This is important. Jesus does not tell them to remain standing and looking toward heaven. He sends them into the world. And after Jesus ascends, the disciples stand gazing upward. Then the angels ask them: “Why are you standing there looking at the sky?” In other words: **“Do not remain frozen. Go forward. The mission has begun.”**

➤ The same message is given to us today. Faith is not only about looking toward heaven; it is also about bringing heaven’s values into the world.

The Gospel affirms this faith as Jesus gives His final command: **“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations.”** This is called the Great Commission.

**Notice** that Jesus does not say, **“Stay where you are.”** He says, **“Go.”** Christianity is not passive. Faith is meant to be shared. Every baptized person is called to be a missionary—not necessarily by traveling far away, but by witnessing to Christ in daily life.

We evangelize through:

- the way we speak,
- the way we treat others,

- the way we forgive,
- the way we remain faithful during trials.

Sometimes people may never read the Bible, but they will read our lives.

Jesus also commands the disciples to baptize and teach. The mission of the Church is not only to gather people but to help them grow in faith.

- Parents teach faith to children.  
Teachers pass on values.  
Priests preach the Gospel.  
Friends encourage one another.
- Every act of kindness and truth becomes part of Christ's mission.

In the second reading, Saint Paul explains what this means: He prays that believers may receive **“a spirit of wisdom and revelation.”** He wants them to understand the greatness of Christ's power. Reminding us that Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father, above every authority and power.

- This means Christ reigns. Even when the world seems chaotic, even when evil appears strong, Christ remains Lord of history.
- The Ascension tells us that Jesus is victorious. He has overcome sin, death, fear, and darkness. And because He lives in glory, we too are called to lift our eyes beyond temporary struggles.
- The Ascension also gives us hope. Jesus returns to the Father not to leave us behind, but to prepare a place for us.
- Our final home is not here on earth. We are pilgrims journeying toward eternal life. This changes how we live.

If heaven is our goal, then we must live with purpose:

- loving more deeply,
- forgiving more quickly,
- serving more generously,
- trusting God more fully.

- Notice how Jesus ends his conversation: He ends with a beautiful promise: **“I am with you always, until the end of the age.”** Even though He ascends into heaven, He never abandons us.
- He is with us:
  - in the Eucharist,
  - in prayer,
  - in Scripture,
  - in moments of suffering,
  - and in the people we encounter.
  - We are never alone.
- The Ascension is not the end of Jesus’ work—it is the beginning of the Church’s mission. Today we are reminded:
- We are called to be witnesses.
  - We are sent to share the Gospel.
  - We are given hope in Christ’s victory.
  - And we are strengthened by His constant presence.
  - Let us not stand still looking at the sky. Let us go forward with faith, carrying Christ into the world. Amen.

*Fr. Leo*

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