

We may feel, sometimes, that everything is perfect. Then, suddenly, something unexpected might happen, and everything changes. We expect many things from our dear ones. However, things could be blurry and uncertain. Nothing is static, including our expectations and the outcome of events. This is exactly what happened to the eleven disciples when they said goodbye to the Risen Lord in a hurry. Even before they could capture the whole event that was happening before their eyes, everything became history. But the unexpected event of Jesus being taken up into heaven, surrounded by angels and the heavenly host, the disciples came down the mountain rejoicing and singing psalms. As we gather together to celebrate the Ascension Sunday of our Lord, the liturgical readings give us a very vivid account of the Ascension and invite us to be absorbed by this mystery.

### **1. Ascension: Not about Absence, instead Eternal Presence**

The feast of the Ascension of the Lord often gives the impression that Jesus is leaving the earth and departing from His disciples. Yet the Gospel of Matthew ends not with absence, but with a promise of abiding presence: “I am with you always, until the end of the age.” The Ascension is therefore not about distance, but about a new way of Christ being present among His people. Jesus entrusts His mission to ordinary disciples, assuring them that they will never walk alone.

The disciples went to the mountain in Galilee as Jesus had directed them. Mountains in Scripture are places of encounter with God, places of revelation and transformation. The disciples are still carrying with them mixed emotions — faith and doubt together. Discipleship is not about perfect certainty and clarity. Even those who doubted were chosen and sent. Jesus did not reject them for their weakness; rather, He entrusted them with His mission. Faith grows not by having all answers, but by remaining close to Christ even amid uncertainty.

### **2. Ascension: Living with Imperfections but a great trust in God.**

Jesus declares, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.” These are not words of domination but words of hope. The risen Lord who conquered sin and death now reigns with the authority of love, mercy, and truth. In a world often marked by fear, violence, and confusion, the Ascension reminds us that history ultimately belongs to

God. Christ is Lord, and His kingdom continues to unfold quietly through every act of compassion, justice, forgiveness, and faithfulness.

Jesus gives a great missionary command: “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations.” Christianity is never meant to remain private or self-contained. The disciples are sent outward. To believe in Christ is to become witnesses to His love in the world. This mission is not reserved only for priests, missionaries, or religious leaders. Every baptized person shares in this calling. Parents pass on faith to children, teachers shape minds and hearts, friends support one another in difficult times, and ordinary acts of kindness become signs of God’s presence.

### **3. Ascension: Carrying Jesus with us always**

Jesus also commands the disciples to baptize and teach. Baptism draws people into the life of the Trinity — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — a relationship of communion and love. To teach the Gospel is not simply to instruct others in doctrines, but to help them encounter Christ personally and live according to His way. The mission of the Church is therefore both spiritual and deeply human: to build a world shaped by the values of the Kingdom. Our task is to carry His presence into the world — into our families, workplaces, communities, and relationships. The Lord who sends us also walks beside us.

Finally, the Gospel ends with a promise that sustains the Church through every age: “I am with you always.” The disciples would soon face persecution, failures, hardships, and uncertainty. Yet they were never abandoned. The same promise is given to us today. Christ accompanies us in moments of joy and sorrow, clarity and confusion, success and struggle. Even when God seems silent or distant, His presence remains faithful.

### **Questions for Self-Reflection**

1. In what areas of my life do I experience both faith and doubt like the disciples?
2. How am I participating in Christ’s mission in my daily life?
3. Do my words and actions reflect the presence of the risen Lord to others?

**Concluding Prayer**

Dear Risen Lord, You call us to continue Your mission in the world even amid our weakness and uncertainty. Strengthen our faith when doubts arise, and help us to trust in Your constant presence. Teach us to live as true disciples who bring Your love, peace, and hope to others. May our lives reflect the joy of the Gospel, and may we never forget that You walk with us every day until the end of time. We make this prayer in Jesus' Holy Name, Amen.

**- Fr Olvin Veigas, SJ**

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