

Homily - Ascension B 2018

[SONG: We are heirs of the Father....] On this Solemnity of the Ascension, we share this message, ***“Called to the Transcendent Realm!”*** Beloved, the Ascension celebrates Christ's return to the Father. It is the culmination of the Paschal Mystery, the Mystery of Christ's Passion, Death, Resurrection and Ascension. It shows us we are from the Father; God made us and we shall return ultimately to the Father. Right now, we are into the “novena” period (9 days’ period) of prayer and joyful anticipation, preceding Pentecost Day, remembering the words of our First Reading (Acts 1:1-15): He *“enjoined them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for ‘the promise of the Father.’”* Accordingly, as we mark the Ascension, may we experience the Holy Spirit anew at Pentecost!

In our Gospel Passage (Mark 16:15-20), *“The Lord Jesus, after he spoke to them, was taken up into heaven and took his seat at the right hand of God.”* This means the Ascension calls us to a realm higher and greater than the ordinary, earthly and superficial; it’s a call to the extraordinary, metaphysical and supernatural. It’s all about transcendence. We are made for transcendence; we are greater than we appear to be, the seed of glory has been sown in us (cf. Isa 45:25; Ps 8:4-5). Never forget that! Such was the basis of St. Paul’s Prayer in our Second Reading (Eph 1:17-23): *“May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give you a Spirit of wisdom and revelation resulting in knowledge of him. May the eyes of your*

hearts be enlightened, that you may know what is the hope that belongs to his call, what are the riches of glory in his inheritance among the holy ones.” Notice this principal focus also in our First Reading: Christ’s *“appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.”* Christ never lost sight of the Kingdom (cf. Matt 11:27; 16:17; 18:10; 26:39-53).

What an important lesson the Ascension teaches us! Having accomplished the work the Father gave Him (cf. John 17:4-5), Jesus is now crowned with inestimable glory. He sits at God's right hand – position of authority, majesty, glory, splendor, and power; as St. Paul relates in our Second Reading (Eph 1:17-23), *“far above every principality, authority, power, and dominion, and every name that is named not only in this age but also in the one to come.”* This has tremendous implication for us; His Ascension is our hope. Through it, Christ renews His invitation – through the manner of our lives – to do the will of Father that we might gain heaven (cf. Matt 7:21; 12:50); to reorder our priorities – tilting them heavenward (cf. Matt 6:19; Luke 16:9; 1John 2:15-17). If we live for Him (cf. Matt 10:33; John 6:27); we shall “sit” at God’s right hand with Him – sharing in His glory, splendor, majesty and power: ***“Where I am, my servant will also be” (John 12:26; 14:3)***, seeing the Lord *“face to face”* (Rev 22:4) and being *“like Him”* (1John 3:2).

[SONG: *What a blessed hope is mine, Through the love of Jesus! I'm an heir of life divine, Through the love of Jesus! He will my soul defend; He, my unchanging Friend He will keep me to the end: All glory be to Jesus!*"]. So, we stand to gain everything if we yield but

stand to lose everything if we reject His invitation.

Beloved, Christ has redeemed us through His Deeds and Words, the entirety of the Paschal Mystery. Even now, we participate both in the mystery and reality of the Ascension (cf. Col 3:1-4). All we need to do is to sustain that intimate relationship “*through Him, and with Him and in Him;*” being “other Christs.” Then our hope of being “*taken up into heaven*” on the Last Day is assured. That's the promise! God does not make empty promises. This is where our Mother's Day celebration today becomes significant! Christ – who ascended into heaven today – honored His mother by granting her a share in His Ascension; hence, the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary body and soul into heaven at the end of her earthly life!

Our Mother's Day celebration receives impetus from Christ's singular example. He had stated to His mother: “*O woman, what have you to do with me? My hour has not yet come*” (John 2:4). Simply put, “*I promise I will remember you at 'my Hour.'*” Let us quickly add, the Hour has different moments – the moment of His Passion, the moment of His Death, the moment of His Resurrection and the moment of His Ascension. During the entirety of His Paschal Mystery, Christ never forgot His mother. What an example for us! At the moment of the Cross/Death, He entrusted His mother to the care of a beloved disciple (cf. John 19:26-27). So how can any believer in Christ doubt or deny that Christ granted His mother to share in His

“moment of the Ascension.” Certainly, Christ glorified did not forget His mother in the grave; He does not make empty promises. He honored her with the mystery and reality of the glorious Assumption! What a way Jesus declares to His Mother, “Happy Mother's Day!” We are to follow His example by celebrating and honoring our mothers – biological, adoption and baptismal godmothers, living or dead (cf. Rom 14:8). We thank them for all the sacrifices they make for us, their children.

On the whole, we pray for families where mothers and children do not get along or have mutually excommunicated each other. Whosever fault it may be (cf. Eph 6:4), may God heal them and reunite them. Also, we pray for sick or hurting mothers – either of themselves, their spouses or for their children's pains and challenges – loss of job, the need for a life partner, drug/alcohol addictions, lack of faith, ill-health or incarceration. May God intervene for them and bring them relief. Finally, through the Ascension, may God help us to resolve whatever worldly or sinful factors threatening our path to heaven – enmity, lustful desires and cravings, passions and orgies, drunkenness, wickedness, unforgiveness, hatred, etc – that we may become aware of them, understand the grave danger involved and be able to respond to them: “*Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me*” (Matt 16:23; Rom 8:5-6; Col 3:5; Phil 3:19-20). May we experience salvation, through Christ our Lord. Amen!