

# EASTER 2015

## *The Ascension of Jesus - May 17*

*The Ascension of Jesus (the return to the glory and power of the Godhead) is the last appearance of the resurrected Jesus. It is a time when the Church is missioned.*

An Easter Newsletter

Number 7, May 17, 2015

*The readings for Ascension:*  
**AA 1,1-11;**  
*Eph 1, 17-23;*  
*Mt. 28, 16-20*

Now we are sent to be his witnesses in the world.

Jesus went around doing good to the poor of this world.



We have eaten and drunk with him after his resurrection from the dead.



He has ordered us to proclaim this to his people.

It is to him that all the prophets bear this witness.



## BE WITH THE DISCIPLES

There are many things you cannot understand in life unless you live through it. That is why the First Nations saying rings so true to every human being: Never say anything about another until you have walked a mile in his moccasins!

Our interpretation of life, and the speed with which we can criticize, will be tempered by our knowledge of what the other person has gone through.



**The Resurrection is always a now event. It must happen in the life and space of each one of us. Jesus must happen in our daily lives, in our homes and in our work.**

The wise teachers in the spiritual life have taught us to use our imagination in our prayer. Place yourself close to Jesus. Look into his eyes. See what the disciples are feeling. Hear them out for what they have experienced.

This applies so well to the Ascension of Jesus. The disciples do not know what is about to happen. They are attentive and we know they took to heart what Jesus said and did.

Look into the faces of the disciples when they hear Jesus make clear: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you." (AA 1,8)

Hear those words echoing in your own heart. Jesus will send the Holy Spirit to all believers.



## THE NEWLY BAPTIZED NEED THE ASCENSION

Always pay attention to what the people of the Church are teaching the newly baptized. These are the people who have joined the community of faith on their own volition. They have discovered something so great here. They want to be followers of Jesus.

Born Catholics are trying to be honest in their own shortcomings. They so often recognize that they do not have the same level of discovery that the new convert brings to their faith life. There is a real interest to know all parts of the life of Jesus on the part of the new convert.

Pay attention why we place such a strong emphasis on the ascension of Jesus for the adult convert.

After the Easter event the resurrected Jesus appeared to many of the disciples and the women (significant persons).

Jesus came and stood among them, he ate breakfast with them and he had Thomas touch the wounds of his sufferings.

Now, this (the Ascension) is the last appearance of the resurrected Jesus. These are the final words of Jesus on this earth.

We want all our newly baptized to hear the mission that Jesus is giving to them. They are not disjointed observers of a historical event. They are active participants in the mission and work of Jesus Christ.

We want them to hear personally the command of Jesus. "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."(AA 1,8)

We want each of these newly baptized to feel in their bones that they have been missioned by the resurrected Jesus. They have been chosen and sent by the resurrected Jesus to be his witnesses to the far corners of the world. Their lives are meant to be a living witness that Jesus lives in their bodies and their hearts. They are being sent to share and give the love and the mercy of God to the people with whom they work. Their lives are to speak Jesus, through their

goodness and their practice of justice and charity.

We want the newly baptized to hear this clear command of Jesus. We want to insist that they take this to heart and practice this in their daily lives.

## CHECK LIST: WHERE WOULD YOU BE STANDING ON THE DAY OF ASCENSION?

1. I clearly want to stand with the disciples and hear the command of Jesus? Yes/no.
2. I understand that my Christian commitment moves me to be the living witness of Jesus Christ? Yes/no.
3. The Ascension clearly means to bring Jesus to the world? Yes/no.
4. My Christian commitment must have an impact on the way I do business Monday to Friday? Yes/no.



## MAY JESUS' FOOTPRINT BE ON YOUR LIFE

There is an ancient legend from the Holy Land that at a particular rock there is an indentation that is supposed to represent the footprint of Jesus when he ascended to the Father. Sincere people claimed that this was the actual spot from which Jesus ascended into heaven.

Almost certainly, this is a religious legend that has no foundation in history. But it does offer us a starting point to reflect on the ascension of Jesus. Using the image of a footprint it would be very useful for every believer to consider that there needs to be a footprint of Jesus embedded in their heart. Their lives need to be marked and claimed by the risen Jesus.

Have the mark of Jesus planted in your outlook towards the people of the world. Rejoice with Jesus that God's revelation has come to the poor and the little ones of this world. No one is excluded. (Mt. 11,25-26) May your relatives see that you exclude no one from importance in life, whether they be unemployed, addicted or just different from

yourself. Be marked with the joy that Jesus had seeing how God actually works by embracing those who get pushed aside in most societies of this world.

Be marked with a sensitivity to how Jesus treated others. Even though we have worn the 'golden rule' to blandness it is still important that we seek to be marked by this working attitude on the part of Jesus. In Mt. 7,12 he guides us: "In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets." In all your conversations, speak only about others as you would like them to speak about yourself. In a world where people through the media (social networks and otherwise) think they can say anything about anyone else, pay attention to the power of your own words. Speak as Jesus would speak. May all your words be marked by his attentiveness to others, especially the vulnerable and those with limited power.

Make your prayer on this Ascension Sunday to have the life and mission of Jesus imprinted on your life. May the marks of Jesus clearly be seen in your words, your efforts to reach out to the poor and your deliberate practice of justice towards all peoples.

## ASCENSION DAY PRAYERS

Risen Jesus,

may our lives be marked by your compassion and goodness. May we seek to live and treat others as you treated the lame, the crippled and the rejected ones.

Risen Jesus,

never allow us to throw excuses your way in order to avoid serving you in all things. Break down all self-serving reasons that we use to not see the plight of the poor and the suffering of this world.

Risen Jesus,

may our mouths always be used for praising your goodness and upbuilding our fellow human being. May our mouth never be hurting to anyone we meet this week.

# PRAY THE SCRIPTURES

*The Word of God leads our feet unto the streets*



He must rise from the dead

## RESURRECTION SURPRISES

NO ONE EVER EXPECTED THE RESURRECTION

Ascension is the dynamic command of Jesus to go forth into the world and bring the Good News of God to the poor and the dispossessed

### ASCENSION IS A COMMAND TO YOUR PARISH

What do you think of a farmer who would start his tractor up in the middle of winter and just leave it run until it ran out of fuel? You would lift your brow and ask, 'why?'

This is the equivalent of bringing our babies to the church, getting the water poured but never making a committed effort to live the Christian life.

This is why we are so insistent that the adult converts are challenged to live the mission that Jesus has given to them in the Ascension.

This command is not given only to the newly baptized. It is given to the entire parish community. No matter how long we have been a practicing Christian, there is always a newness in the command of Jesus.

In a society where individualism and entitlement are core values, we are challenged and sent by Jesus to break our lives and share them with the poor, just as Jesus shares his life with the poor of this world.

What Jesus has done, so now we must do!



PRAY OVER THESE IMPORTANT WORDS FROM OUR SUNDAY READINGS.

## KEY WORDS

**Mt. 28,16** "Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them.



**Mt. 28,17**

When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted.

**Mt. 28,18** And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me.



**Mt. 28,19**

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.

**Mt. 28,20**

And teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.

**Mt. 28, 30**

And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age