

Ascension of the Lord – May 24, 2020

Acts 1: 1-11 – Ephesians 1: 17-23 – Matthew 28: 16-20

As we draw near to the time when we will be able to come together again as a parish and as a believing community to worship and to share in Eucharist; as we have begun to open up our society, hoping to experience again, though in ways that are different, the things we enjoy doing that are a part of a more normal way of living; as we hopefully are able to renew relationships that have been affected in different ways over these past few months; it may not be all that difficult to appreciate some of the dynamics present in the Feast of the Ascension of the Lord. Especially is this the case in the lives of the Apostles and other followers of Jesus as they had now to cope with the physical separation from Jesus that the Ascension recalls.

We have come to know all too well recently that separation from persons and from activities that have been a part of our lives is not easy. It is, indeed, difficult. It is painful. Yet departing and separation, change of any sort, are a part of living. Some of these occurrences have been planned and anticipated. Others simply happen suddenly and unexpectedly. Often times, however, these occurrences are the only way that persons can grow and mature. We cannot just cling to what was before, or how we think things were before, as life and reality are not like this.

In the case of the Ascension, not only was this event

necessary within the ministry of Jesus, it was also a triumphant moment. It marked for Jesus the final stage of his victory. The part of his work on earth was complete. Now he was able to return to the Father. It is also a moment of triumph for those who follow him – then and now. Now the task is theirs. Now the task is ours. Now is the time for them and for us to proclaim the Good News Jesus announced: the Good News of how we can be the very best that we are as creations of a loving God.

We heard or read Saint Paul's prayer for the Christians at Ephesus. It is a prayer for us as well. May we have the insight to recognize the power of the Spirit within us to change and to be transformed, to do away with sinfulness and its effects, to baptize and to renew our world and so teach it not only the words of Christ's command to love but show the reality of how that love is to be lived.

Even at this time, even as we continue through these wrenching difficulties that affect our daily lives whether personally or as a community, a State or a country, simply hanging on to the past, to gaze longingly into the clouds of the past, does little.

The challenge that is before us is to look ahead, to recognize what we are experiencing as assistance to our faith, particularly our faith in the Resurrection. We are to believe that we have the power within us to improve and to enhance the world.

To me, at least, this is one of the messages of this Feast of

the Ascension, especially at this time. We must move on from now and look ahead for greater opportunities and means to reveal a truly good and gracious God.