

Solemnity of the Ascension
Acts 1:1-11; Eph 1:17-23; Mt 28:16-20
May 21, 2023

You probably have heard the story from the Second World War about soldiers who liberated a village in France. After they had help reorganize life in the village several of the soldiers found a demolished statue of Christ in square in the village. They made an effort at patching it up and restoring it. They found all the pieces but the hands. One of the soldiers made a sign and put it at the base of the statue – it read *‘I have no hands but yours.’*

Jesus had finished the work he was sent to do. In his ministry, his preaching and teaching, in his healing and lifting people up, Jesus was always ‘the love of God made visible.’ His words to the eleven are words to us: *‘Go, teach, make disciples of all nations.’* Each one of us is meant to carry on the work of Jesus; each one of us is called to be ‘the love of God made visible.’

Jesus has no hands but ours to lift people up out of pit of loneliness and isolation. He has no hands but ours to guide others to God’s way, no hands but ours to hold the lonely and forgotten, no hands but ours to comfort those in pain. He has no eyes but ours to see the good in this world and so see its weaknesses and needs. Jesus has no voice but ours to speak the good news of his love for every person, no voice but ours to speak words of forgiveness and healing, words of love and encouragement. He has no voice but ours to call for justice and fairness for those who are voiceless.

Jesus has no ears but ours to hear the anger of those alienated from society or the church, no ears but ours to hear the cry of the poor, the homeless, the helpless and the hopeless of our city. Jesus has no feet but ours to carry his presence, his care and comfort to the shut-ins, those confined to hospital beds, or in wheel chairs.

We can do all these things in so many acts of random kindness that are ours to do every day of life because we are sensitive to the needs of others.

We do all these things as we try to live this Mass outside these walls, in the lives we live, the work we do, the service we give, and the prayers we pray.

As we continue to celebrate this feast of the Ascension and share in the Eucharist, we can pray for ourselves and for each other that we may be blessed to follow the advice St Francis of Assisi gave his early followers: *“preach the gospel at all times and when necessary use words.”*

- Fr. Stephen Lattner, O.S.B.