

Ascension of the Lord  
Sunday, May 28, 2017

The readings and gospel this week pertain to the Ascension of the Lord which was surely an extremely scary and sad time for the 11 remaining disciples. The disciples were, after all, human. Jesus had been with them every day for three plus years. Imagine the joy of seeing their beloved Christ again, three days after his brutal crucifixion. To see Jesus alive after death must have been truly astonishing. They probably thought that Jesus would be with them in the physical sense forever. However, we learn in today's readings that forty days later they would find themselves once again missing their beloved Christ but accepting Jesus' new directive.

In today's Gospel we learn that Christ had given his remaining disciples a new commandment. First, they were to travel back to where it all began, Galilee. Can you imagine the joy and the excitement of the unexpected as they traveled to Galilee? It must have been one awesome road trip!

Once they arrived they bowed in worship as Jesus approached them. His remaining words here on earth were that he had been given all power in heaven and on earth. We are to make disciples of all nations and teach and obey all that he commanded during his time on earth. He was with them and is with us today at all times.

This last meeting was not a disappointment for the disciples – it was rejuvenation. The disciples likely took a moment to let all that Jesus said sink in a moment and then followed his directive. As Father Franzen would say, we should “take a moment” and allow today's gospel to sink in and then share with others what He has commanded here on earth.

Pope Francis once said “Jesus teaches us another way: Go out. Go out and share your testimony, go out and interact with your brothers, go out and ask questions. Become the Word in body as well as spirit.” If I had to give an example of what Christ meant in today's gospel it would be our youth that attend Catholic Heart Work Camp. These kids paint houses for the elderly and indigent, build ramps for the disabled, clean churches and schools in impoverished areas, work in daycare centers and provide assistance to food pantries. They sweat, get sunburned, get sore muscles but never complain. By the end of the week they are all dead tired, yet, like the disciples in today's gospel, they are rejuvenated! Each day they are sharing what Christ has taught and are making new disciples in each city they visit. This is what Jesus meant when he directed all of us to teach and obey all that he commanded.

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