



Bringing Home the Word

Seventh Sunday of Easter / Ascension of the Lord
May 28, 2017

Empty, Holy Shoes

By Mary Katharine Deeley

My favorite banner for the Solemnity of the Ascension of Our Lord shows a pair of running shoes, laces askew, empty of the feet that had worn them, as though their owner had suddenly realized he had somewhere else to be.

I don't think Jesus' ascension happened exactly that way, but there was something poignant about the empty shoes. They reminded me of makeshift memorials for those who die suddenly or tragically in public areas. Think of the gathering of

items that adorned the rubble of the twin towers after 9/11 or the flowers, medals, and other items that are left in front of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

The disciples might have been tempted to leave such items in the place where Jesus left them. They stared into the sky until someone told them Jesus would come back. Then they returned to Jerusalem.

We leave memorials because we don't know what else to do. It's a way of doing *something* in the face of tragic and senseless death. By contrast, the disciples and all who follow Christ were given very clear instructions: "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."

The memorial to the death and resurrection of Christ is not a pair of shoes—it is our action. It is the preaching of the good news by word and deed. It is witnessing to faith in someone who lives, not in someone who has died.

The tennis shoes on that banner were not mourning one who left. They were waiting for someone to put them on and keep going. †

Now, make disciples.

Sunday Readings

Acts 1:1–11

"It is not for you to know the times or seasons that the Father has established by his own authority."

Ephesians 1:17–23

"May the eyes of your hearts be enlightened, that you may know what is the hope that belongs to his call."

Matthew 28:16–20

"And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age."

A Word From Pope Francis

The creed...contains a christological confession: it takes us through all the mysteries of Christ's life up to his death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven before his final return in glory. It tells us that this God of communion...is capable of embracing all of human history and drawing it into the dynamic unity of the Godhead...The believer who professes his or her faith is taken up...into the truth being professed. He or she cannot truthfully recite the words of the creed without being changed...making it part of a great fellowship...the Church.

—Lumen Fidei
(The Light of Faith),
June 29, 2013



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

ONE? TWO? REFLECTION

- Where in life do you need to put on Christ and keep going?
- When you think of Christ's ascension, what images come to mind?



Matthew's New Moses

By Virginia Smith

A likely locale for Matthew's Gospel is Antioch, Syria, around AD 80.

Using the audience's Hebrew background, Matthew explains Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah.

Jesus emerges as the new Moses. With Jesus' birth, Matthew draws parallels between the Messiah and Moses. Only Matthew tells how Herod's jealousy forced Joseph and his family into Egyptian exile. Just as Pharaoh feared the Hebrews in Moses' time, so Herod feared Jesus and his family. Herod's phobia led to the slaughter of innocent young boys

(Matthew 2:16–18), just as male Hebrew infants were doomed under Pharaoh (Exodus 1:15–22).

Matthew's comparisons to Moses continue in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, his most famous discourse. Placing the stamp of divinity on Jesus, Matthew situates him above Moses, having Jesus quote from the Law Moses brought from the mountain and expand on its meaning by his own authority from a mountain site of his own.

Matthew's is a thoughtful Gospel, spotlighting a reflective Jesus. Organized into components, Matthew's Gospel is referred to as a catechism. The Church has frequently used it in its teaching ministry.

Here we meet Jesus the teacher, the rabbi.

In five principal areas, Matthew assembles much of what Jesus said on given topics and makes single discourses of each one. Each is preceded by a narrative section that focuses on the same theme and is concluded by some variation on the phrase, "When Jesus finished these words" (Matthew 7:28, 11:1, 13:53, 19:1). The fifth and final discourse ends slightly differently: "When Jesus finished all these words" (Matthew 26:1).

In this Gospel, Jesus is frequently addressed as "Teacher," even by his opponents. Jesus instructs the entire community as Moses did before him, but he doesn't go to the mountain to receive authority; he preaches from the mountain by his own authority. †

Source: *Catholic Update*, © May 2013, Liguori Publications

Jesus Will Come "When the Time Is Fulfilled"

By Leonard Foley, OFM

Our salvation story is not completed at the ascension or on Pentecost. "When the time is fulfilled," Jesus will come again. The Bible often portrays the Day of the Lord as a day of wrath, when God will finally vindicate his people and when those who have dominated and killed and stolen and hated will suffer the eternal permanence of their choice. When Jesus comes again, this work will finally be finished.


It is human to ask, "Well, what will happen to *me*?" The best answer is simply to say that I will be eternally amazed at

the wonder of God's plan: how, in order to have creatures united to him in real friendship he let human freedom make its own choices, for good or ill; how, without forcing anyone, he gave everyone enough reason to trust him, often in the dark; how Jesus was the amazing presence of God, sharing every human thing except sin; how, through seeming weakness, God "lost" on the cross; how, by lifting up the human Jesus who had made the perfect human act of love in giving his own blood—life—God lifted up all who would choose to be joined to Jesus.

This is perhaps not very satisfying to a me-oriented culture such as we live in. Heaven will not be boring, as a sensation-stimulated society imagines it. But the focus will not be on me. And the more I can enter into a God-oriented, Jesus-

oriented frame of mind right now, the better I will be able to prepare—or rather, be prepared by God—for a God-centered eternity. †

Source: *Catholic Update*, © September 1985, Liguori Publications



○ God, whose Son ascended today to heaven, as the apostles looked on, grant that we may work to make his kingdom come on earth, so that we can enjoy his kingdom in heaven for all eternity. Amen.

—Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

WEEKDAY READINGS

May 29—June 3

Mon. Easter Weekday:
Acts 19:1–8 / Jn 16:29–33

Tue. Easter Weekday:
Acts 20:17–27 / Jn 17:1–11a

Wed. Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary: Zep 3:13–18a or Rom 12:9–16 / Lk 1:39–56

Thu. St. Justin:
Acts 22:30; 23:6–11 / Jn 17:20–26

Fri. Easter Weekday:
Acts 25:13b–21 / Jn 21:15–19

Sat. St. Charles Lwanga and Companions:
Acts 28:16–20, 30–31 / Jn 21:20–25