



Bringing Home the Word

Ascension of the Lord (A)

May 24, 2020

Truth Revealed

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

Pinturicchio's wall painting, *Ascension*, is found in the apartments of Pope Alexander VI Borgia and was painted around the same time as one of Columbus' voyages to America: 1492. When the Alexander died in 1503, these rooms were shut and not opened again until 1889. How could such artistic treasures have been locked up and forgotten for 400 years?

The same thing can happen with the feast of the Ascension. We don't always give it much thought. Its powerful beauty is locked away, collecting dust.

The great truth revealed today is that Jesus is in heaven, in bodily form, seated at the right hand of the Father and watching over us all. From there he intercedes for us; from there he sends us on mission.

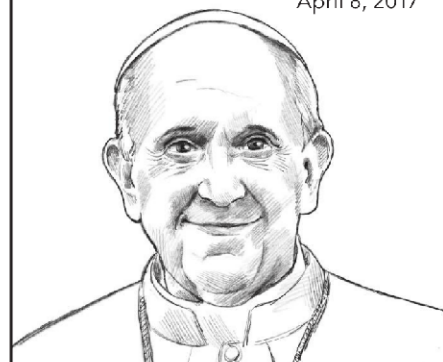
What are we to do with this truth? Treat it like a myth or an ancient story? Just stare at the sky and wonder like the apostles? No, we are to get busy building God's kingdom. His kingdom will not happen automatically. He calls us to be his witnesses until the end of the earth. We cannot sit by and let our politics, our schools, our churches, and our arts evolve unguided by the gospel. We are called to roll up our sleeves and get involved. "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations..." (Matthew 28:19). Remember the good administrator who was left some talents. His master went away only to eventually return asking for a rendering. Jesus has left only to return again. Until then, it's time to build his kingdom. +

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A Word from Pope Francis

The Church holds out a mission, and I would like to entrust you with this mission. It is to go back and talk to your grandparents. Today more than ever we need this bridge, this dialogue, between grandparents and grandchildren, between the young and the elderly.

—World Youth Day prayer vigil,
April 8, 2017



Sunday Readings

Acts 1:1-11

As they were looking on, [Jesus] was lifted up, and a cloud took him from their sight.

Ephesians 1:17-23

And he put all things beneath his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church.

Matthew 28:16-20

[Jesus said,] "Make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit."

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

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- How do I accept the responsibility of actively building up God's kingdom?
- How can I showcase the truth of the ascension in my life?

Faith and Finances: Managing Debt

By Phil Lenahan

There's a link between our faith and how we handle money. Examining this link begins with considering what really matters. Money touches many aspects of life—family, work, and our faith. Are your financial goals determined by our culture, with its emphasis on *having*?



Or are they based on the principles of Scripture and the Catholic faith, which emphasize *being*?

I remember my dad sharing stories of the Great Depression. He spoke of families setting spending priorities—because if they didn't, there wouldn't be enough for basic needs. Now we're taught by our consumer culture to buy all we want, when we want, without concern for repayment. If we don't have money today...well, that's what credit cards and home-equity loans are for, right?

The Financial Drug

Debt has become a financial drug, creating dependencies for millions of Americans. There is no doubt that the misuse of debt played a major role in recent economic crises. Some statistics:

—Seven of ten of households with credit cards don't pay the full balance every month.

—The average household carries a credit card balance of \$8,000.

—About eight of every ten undergraduates have credit cards, averaging \$2,200 in credit card debt.

Does Catholic teaching give insight into debt? People are often surprised to find that Scripture and other Church writings have much to say about finances. "The borrower is the slave of the lender" (Proverbs 22:7).

Productive, Unproductive Debt

It makes sense to borrow when debt is used prudently to buy assets that increase in value. That's *productive* debt. For debt to be used productively, there must be guards to limit excessive borrowing. Borrowers must have a financial cushion to manage debt during crises.

Some types of debts are *unproductive*. Unproductive debt is used to purchase depreciating assets, those that decline in value. The most common example is credit card purchases that aren't paid off each month. Americans would do well to eliminate their unproductive debt and develop a more cautious attitude even when using productive debt.

Eliminating Unproductive Debt

Straightforward steps can be taken to eliminate unproductive debt rapidly.

Once you've committed to becoming free of debt, your first step is to prepare a financial plan. Jesus says, "Which of you

wishing to construct a tower does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if there is enough for its completion?" (Luke 14:28–29). Your plan should include a balance sheet, debt summary, an annual budget, and strategies for savings and paying down debt.

Accelerating Payments

Many with unproductive debt pay the minimum required balance. This strategy will keep you in debt forever. Instead, I recommend an aggressive approach that will eliminate unproductive debts in short order. This requires changing spending habits and perhaps temporarily taking a second job. But by increasing the amount of money allocated to debt repayment, you can be debt-free quickly.

Our financial priorities have ramifications for our families and faith. Becoming financially free is foremost a function of fulfilling our call as stewards of God's providence. We must grow to understand God's principles for managing money and apply them. +



Risen Lord, you share with us the mission of God. Help me to use my gifts and talents to do God's work.

—From *Hopeful Meditations for Every of Easter Through Pentecost*, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

May 25-30

Monday, Easter Weekday:
Acts 19:1–8 / Jn 16:29–33

Tuesday, St. Philip Neri:
Acts 20:17–27 / Jn 17:1–11a

Wednesday, Easter Weekday:
Acts 20:28–38 / Jn 17:11b–19

Thursday, Easter Weekday:
Acts 22:30; 23:6–11 / Jn 17:20–26

Friday, Easter Weekday:
Acts 25:13b–21 / Jn 21:15–19

Saturday, Easter Weekday:
Acts 28:16–20, 30–31 / Jn 21:20–25

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