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Last week while looking through my daughter's Children's Bible, I was disappointed to find that the picture that illustrated the Resurrection, showed Jesus, His disciples gathered round, and He already in mid-air, ascending into heaven! To make matters worse, this Children's Bible is entitled "My Catholic Children's Bible", which had previously given me the hope that the editors might have had a more accurate way of depicting Christ's Resurrection. But we sometimes forget that after the Resurrection, after Easter Sunday, Jesus did not just ascend immediately into heaven. Perhaps we overlook the Ascension and the forty days because the Ascension is celebrated on a weekday and not on a Sunday. It proves why it is important to follow the Church Calendar, and in doing so to follow the Life of Christ as it influences our day-to-day life, redeeming the time, and redeeming the year.

Where are we in the Life of Christ? We are still in the season of Easter, the 40 days that Jesus spent appearing and reappearing to the Disciples, preparing them for all that was to come next. Starting last week and continuing for several more, the Prayer Book's Gospel readings are taken from the long speech Jesus delivered to his disciples at the Last Supper. Last week he said the disciples' sorrow at his death and our sorrow until he comes again are like labor pains. Today he tells the disciples what will happen because of his Ascension, when He will leave them and return into heaven to sit on the right hand of God until He comes again. And He gives His disciples the promise that the first thing that will happen after the Ascension is that the Holy Ghost will come to earth.

While Jesus is on earth, God's presence is, in a sense, localized in him. Jesus in the flesh, on earth, is tangible, physical, and fully present to man *in the flesh*. After he goes back to heaven the Spirit can come into the hearts of those who believe and follow Jesus, and Jesus the Word of God can be made flesh again and again, in as many hearts and souls *as receive Him*. God is always fully present everywhere. Now the Father, through the Son, can be made flesh again in man everywhere and in all ages until Christ's coming again, by the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus says to His disciples, *I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. The Comforter is the Holy Spirit. The Comforter will bring Jesus the Word, from the Father into men's hearts and souls.* Jesus tells us of the several things that the Holy Spirit will do when He comes. First, he will show

the world what sin really is. The Holy Spirit will teach men that sin is disbelief in Jesus, placing our pride above and before the will of God in Jesus Christ, and a lack of trust in what He commands and what He promises. If we really believed who Jesus is and what He teaches, we would not place our pride and vanity above His will and way for us. So, in that sense, every sin is a manifestation of disbelief in Jesus. Jesus says, *He will reprove the world of sin...because they believe not in me.*

The Spirit will also reveal to the world who is truly righteous, *He will reprove the world of righteousness...because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more.* The only truly righteous man who ever lived was the Son of God, Jesus Christ. Jesus proves that He was who He said He was—the Son of God and the Messiah of Israel, and therefore the one who has God's authority to teach. The overwhelming proof that Jesus is who He says He is, for the Disciples, the eyewitnesses, was the Resurrection and the Ascension of Jesus. And yet still they needed the coming of the Holy Ghost to help them to remember all that they had seen in and heard from Jesus, to convict them of their own sins, to bring alive the fact that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and to *comfort them* as they began to die to sin and embrace Jesus in their hearts by faith. And there will be others, like us. We have not been eyewitnesses to the Resurrection and the Ascension and so must have the truth and meaning of these great events revealed to us by the power of the Holy Spirit. We who believe today, believe because the Holy Spirit has convicted us of the truth embraced by the Apostles and passed on to us in Holy Scripture. After all, Jesus says in this morning's Gospel, *I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth.*

Next the Holy Ghost will show the world what judgment is. The World will be judged according to the unchanging Truth of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit guides us into the Truth of God, and God does not change His mind, for in God there *is no variableness or turning.* According to His Truth, God has passed His judgment on the devil, the fallen angels, and the world. According to the Epistle to the Hebrews, the greatest power the devil has over us is to make us fear death. Jesus' death and resurrection break that power because they prove that death is nothing to fear. We shall return from our graves in bodies and go to heaven, just as Jesus did, just as was foretold by Job. Jesus says, *He will reprove the world of judgment...because the prince of this world is judged.*

St. James' gives us a guide in this morning's Epistle for listening to the Holy Spirit and opening up ourselves to Him. The Holy Spirit is that *good and perfect gift which cometh down from the Father of Lights.* The Holy Spirit is *the word of truth,*

*[making us] the first fruits of His creatures. St. James tells us to listen to the Holy Spirit, by being swift to hear...slow to speak...slow to wrath. For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Wherefore lay apart all filthiness, and superfluity of naughtiness, go to Confession, confess your sins, and do not go back to those old sins, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls, listen to the scriptures and apply them to your life. We cannot be guided into the truth of God if we are full of wrath, anger, or bitterness. St. James exhorts us to receive the word of God with meekness, and humility reminding us that we cannot hear the voice of God in our lives if we are full of pride and given to sinful habits.*

As we approach the feasts of the Ascension and Pentecost, let us prepare ourselves spiritually, fixing our hearts on Christ and His Kingdom where true joys are to be found. Let us lay aside whatever distracts us from Christ so that we may be better able to hear His voice and know His Will in our lives through the Holy Spirit. May we too join the disciples in the upper chamber on the Day of Pentecost. Amen.