

The Ascension of the Lord
May 29, 2022
“Sharing the Mission of Jesus”

Acts 1:1-11
Eph 1:17-23
Lk 24:46-53

My Brothers and Sisters in the Lord –

What would the world be like if there were no God? What would our lives be like if God did not exist? Would there even be a world – the universe itself? Would we exist at all?

Yet, today, there is a growing number of people who deny God’s existence. The atheists believe that there is no God – as well as no life after death. The agnostics say that we simply can’t know if God exists.

And then, what about our own lives? Would we be gathered here today if we did not believe? Would we be the person each of us is, if we did not believe that God exists – and expects something from us?

How atheists continue to go on living, day after day, is beyond my comprehension. What do they do when life becomes painful and hard – and filled with suffering on so many levels? How do they live with their mistakes? How do they fill that empty place within themselves?

Of course, they try to fill their emptiness with things – with wealth. They seek to fill it with power – with control over people and events. And they try to find and enjoy pleasure in every possible way.

However, eventually, they discover that none of these things live up to their hopes or expectations. They often turn to alcohol or other drugs to dull and mitigate their pain. Ultimately, they must face death – And death without belief in God or in an afterlife must be unimaginable in its hopelessness!

All the scriptures for today reveal that God exists – and that He has a plan for every person He created. Jesus came from God. He claimed that he was the Son of God. Jesus possessed a power that was far beyond any human power. He cured the sick, instantaneously – He restored physical wholeness to the disabled – He even raised the dead back to life.

But, most importantly, Jesus rose from the dead – after being crucified, run through with a lance, and buried in a sealed tomb.

The mission of Jesus was to reveal that God exists – and cares about every person in His creation. God loves everyone – God knows the heart and soul of everyone – Moreover, God created us to share in His everlasting glory and love. But this would be in another life – after our life here!

However, we must want that life – We must love God in return – We must repent and be truly sorry for our sins – This means that we must break with those things which lead to sin – We must begin to live on a different level – a spiritual level – We must live on a level that puts God first – For us, God must be above the wealth, power, or pleasure that the non-believers so avidly seek!

The significance of the Ascension of Jesus is to teach us that Jesus came from God – and returned to God. However, God never abandons us. Jesus promised the Holy Spirit – In his Letter to the Ephesians, St. Paul prays that God will give us the Holy Spirit of wisdom and revelation – This will result in knowledge of God. He prays that God will enlighten the eyes of our hearts to know the hope that comes with God's call.

Likewise, we are called to an eternal inheritance with all the other holy ones who have gone before us. All this was brought to us by Jesus. And Jesus, as God's Son, is the Cosmic Christ – He is Lord of all things and of the universe itself!

Brothers and Sisters, as believers, we are truly gifted and blessed. As disciples of Jesus, we are doubly gifted and blessed. But we are also entrusted with a commission. We are to be witnesses for Jesus and for the Father who sent him.

Consequently, we must challenge non-believers by the way we live our lives – We must lead them to question why wealth, power, and pleasure do not determine or control our lives. We should inspire them to discover that people have far more value than material things – that love encompasses infinitely more than eros – that repentance and forgiveness bring a peace beyond human understanding – and that being vulnerable opens the human heart to the realm of the Spirit's power!

This commission is a daunting responsibility in an increasingly Godless age and culture. But we have the promise of God's grace in Jesus and in the Holy Spirit.

Let us pray that we remain forever faithful
in this mission –
with gratitude and love in our hearts!

Amen.

May 29, 2022

Msgr. Russell G. Terra