

THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD A SIGN OF HOPE

If you happened to be one of the eleven, what would have been your reaction when you saw Jesus taken into heaven? How did the apostles feel? They might have had mixed feelings - a feeling of joy because their master has finally proved that He is God, and a feeling of disappointment, because after the resurrection He brought them new hope, but He was leaving them again without seeing the physical establishment of the kingdom.

If they remembered what He had told them that He was going to prepare a place for them and come back to take them, then the disappointment would not be great. (Jn. 14:2-3).

We heard that the ascension took place on a mountain, and it reflects the presence of God, as Moses received the commandments on Mt. Sinai, Elijah met God on Mt. Horeb, Jesus gave the sermon on the mountain, and the transfiguration took place on the mountain. Before He was taken to heaven, He commissioned His disciples to continue His work by going to the whole world to make disciples for Him. He promised not to leave them orphans but He would send the Holy Spirit to be with them. The angel also reassured them that He would come again.

The resurrection and ascension of the Lord should encourage us to be committed Christians. This is because, there is a sure proof that all that Christ told His disciples had been fulfilled, and that our toil will not be in vain.

St. Paul also reminds us that believers possess the same power used to take Jesus into heaven. He prayed for the Ephesians, that God might give them a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of God, and that they might know what is the immeasurable greatness of His power in us who believe.

As the disciples were commissioned to continue with the work, so we are also to continue to evangelize as we wait in joyful hope for the coming of the Lord. We can do this by the power of the Holy Spirit, so we have to prepare for His coming. The disciples did not just wait looking up to heaven all the time to see Him coming, but they stayed together as a community and prayed. We expect so many things to happen in our lives but we fail to spend a few minutes in prayer to communicate with God.

The ascension is a sign of hope for us because Christ has conquered evil. He has gone to open the gates of heaven closed by Adam, and He sits at the right hand of His Father. So St. Paul tells us, "Since you have been raised up to be with Christ, you must look for the things that are above, where Christ is, sitting at God's right hand. Let your thoughts be on things above, not on the things that are on the earth, because you have died, and now the life that you have is hidden with Christ in God. But when Christ is revealed - and He is your life - you, too will be revealed with Him in glory," (Col. 3:1-4).

The world is polluted with all kinds of things; air pollution, chemical pollution, water pollution, noise pollution, and what have you. In the same way our spiritual world is polluted with all kinds of theories and ideologies leading people astray from the truth. We have to ask the risen Lord to fill us with the Holy Spirit, the breath of life, to help us know the truth, live it and teach it.