

St Pius & St Anthony Homily Ascension Sunday Year C (2025) Luke

A popular catchphrase in real estate circles is “Location, location, location” It emphasizes factors that affect home property value, such as the prospective home’s proximity to one’s work, schools for the children, proximity to other members of family. But also, proximity to other amenities like grocery stores hospitals or doctor offices, other retail businesses, community parks, as well considering safety issues and transportation concerns, like good travel routes and accessibility to other cities. All these factors affect the value of home property. **Location is everything.** Well, for us celebrating today the Feast of the Ascension, we might ask, “Why Ascension, what is behind it-What is this all about?” I’d answer that it’s about ‘location, location’, because in regard to Jesus, location becomes a problem – just where exactly is He right now? He’s the universal Savior of all people, He has worldwide mission to grow the kingdom all over, so He needs to be everywhere, simultaneously engaged to anyone wherever they happen to be. So, the Ascension of Jesus is the solution. After Jesus ascends bodily in glory to be seated at the Father’s right hand, He then returns to us in Pentecost confirmed by **the presence of the Holy Spirit**, and after this, we can answer with confidence, that now Jesus is (like the old Beatles song title and the theme of the old cartoon ‘Where’s Waldo?) Now, Jesus is **‘Here, There and Everywhere’!**

For example, notice that prior to his death-resurrection, Jesus was always pigeonholed to a particular geographic place. Tagged to a specific area, such as when we hear that He is the ‘the Nazorean’ in **Matthew 2:23** (fulfilling the prophecy that the messiah would be ‘Nazorean’) or in **Luke 24:19** (when the disciples on road to Emmaus identify Jesus as ‘Nazorean’) (*Paul gets labeled as one of those ‘Nazoreans’ too in Acts 24:5, and even the apostle Nathanael falls into this location fixation, when he derogatorily refers to Jesus, asking, “Can anything good come from Nazareth?” in John 1:46*). Later Jesus will get geo-tagged again, with the whole geographical area of Galilee, when He is put down in John 7:41, and in the same chapter, Nicodemus will defend Jesus, & he will get labelled too, smeared by the Pharisees as they charge, “*You are not from Galilee also, are you?*”(Jn 7:42). The problem here is fixating the person to a particular place, and with Jesus that is a problem because He came to save us all, everyone, everyplace, He needs to be wherever we may be. *But so long* as He is in Capernaum, he cannot be in Caesarea, if he is in Bethany he cannot be at Cana. That is a problem, UNTIL..... He rises in glory and then returns to us in the form/presence of ‘Holy Spirit’. As Spirit, Jesus is now boundless, omnipresent, all-pervasive, compenetrating all time and space. By ascending, and then returning in descent of Holy Spirit, Jesus overcomes and has risen above, the limitation of being always isolated to this or that particular area-geo-fenced to a specific GPS Pin. I notice that He even anticipates this problem earlier in His public teaching: once when His disciples beg Him to

give them some ‘inside-trader’ information about the end of the world (Messiah’s 2nd coming), in Matthew 24:23-27. Jesus will tell them that if anyone says, ‘Look, here is the Messiah!’ or, ‘There he is!’ Do not believe it.....26 if they say to you, ‘He is in the desert,’ do not go out there; if they say, ‘He is in the inner rooms(palace),’ do not believe it.27 For just as lightning comes from the east and is seen as far as the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be.” This lightning reference is Jesus saying that Spirit-God’s presence is instantaneous, beyond even the speed of light – diffusing everywhere immediately: A God flash and He is everywhere! Now we will hear? more about this next week, about the ‘tele-presence’ (*telepathy-teleporting?*) of God, that as Spirit- it is a divine synchrony, when we learn that God’s speech is transposed/translated into everyone’s tongue and God is Light manifest as those individual fire flames resting above every person’s head (that crack speed lightning presence of the Divine! (*Or is this an example of what quantum mechanic physicists call ‘superposition’ where one atomic particle can occupy two different – positions--at least two--at the same time-two places simultaneously!*) But more on that next week!

So God as Holy Spirit, goes a long way (everyway) to explain how Jesus can be with and accessible to all of us, everywhere! It is what we mean by being baptized into the Trinity and God dwelling within us thereafter. We know that we were created in the image and likeness of God (God’s imprint upon our soul) but by Jesus’ coming to save us in our flesh, this nearness of God with in our heart is reinforced even more-this is what St Augustine meant when he said that God was more intimate to Him, than Augustine was to his own self!)

But there’s even more, and I am so interested in this connection because of our Catholic belief in Jesus’ Real Presence in the Holy Eucharist. Jesus interestingly mentioned His Ascension before it ever happens, back in John Chapter 6 (the ‘Summa’ chapter on Holy Eucharist). So what’s connection between Eucharist and Ascension. Well, its the other way that Jesus is equally and ubiquitously PRESENT to us all! Back in John 6:62-3, just after Jesus mentioned His flesh being real food, and His blood being real drink, he went on to say, “Does this shock you? What if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? It is the spirit that gives life....” Jesus ascend and His Spirit return descend again! So for just a moment, let’s explore this additional solution to the problem of How God can be omnipresent to us everywhere the world over simultaneously. Let’s think of Jesus’ presence, sacramentally, (which is Holy Eucharist), and answer the question:

How can every person, how can we all, as believers in Holy Eucharist, how can we all experience a piece of Jesus, wherever in the world we may find ourselves? It’s MASS, right here now, yet also everywhere else Eucharist is being celebrated! Jesus covered it at the Last Supper promising to be with us always (Jn 14:17-18 He says ‘I will be in you....I will not leave you orphaned... I will come to you”) He gives us Himself, time and again, day after day, His presence, Body and Blood in this

sacrament always. Jesus is everywhere present in any believing body that has 1)called upon Him, 2)come to one of his Eucharistic Altars and 3)received Him, in you and in you and in you and in you, repeated as many times as there are people receiving (and still yet remaining beyond that time and place as He is reserved too in the Blessed Sacrament-every tabernacle! The Holy Eucharist is a one more way, answer to how He be in all places, at all times. And what a gift that we encounter, and experience Him, His Real Presence, in every Mass, here and everywhere.