



Bringing Home the Word

Ascension of the Lord

May 8, 2016

Jesus, I Trust in You

By Janel Esker

Iwouldn't have done well at the ascension. Sure, I'd have followed Jesus and listened intently. But instead of bowing in homage, I would have waved my hand urgently, asking, "What do you mean 'it is not for you to know the times or seasons that the Father has established?' I really need to know when the Spirit will be sent. I have a very busy schedule, so a more specific time would be helpful, Jesus, sir."

I can imagine Jesus simply shaking his head, unsure of what to do with this particularly challenging follower.

Sunday Readings

Acts 1:1–11

"As they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him from their sight."

Ephesians 1:17–23

"May the eyes of your hearts be enlightened, that you may know what is the hope that belongs to his call."

Luke 24:46–53

"As he blessed them he parted from them and was taken up to heaven."

For those of us who like to plan and schedule our lives in precise detail, the ascension presents some challenges. He promises the Spirit will come—but he doesn't say when, how, or what that will mean. It's an in-between space, and I'm not a big fan of those.

We often have these in-between moments—waiting for a diagnosis, looking for a new job, seeking healing in a relationship. They don't fit into our calendars, and we can't predict exactly when the hoped-for result will come. But we're asked, as were the disciples, to trust that even if it feels as though he's absent, Jesus is with us—and he does fulfill his promises. He sent the Spirit as promised, and he promises us life in abundance.

Luke's Gospel reports that the disciples returned from the ascension "with great joy" as they awaited the Spirit. Instead of feeling anxious in our own in-between moments, can we learn from the disciples? Can we live with the joy of the Gospel? †

A Word From Pope Francis

Let us not be afraid to turn to [Jesus] to ask forgiveness, to ask for a blessing, to ask for mercy! He always pardons us, he is our Advocate: he always defends us! Don't forget this! The Ascension of Jesus into heaven acquaints us with this deeply consoling reality on our journey: in Christ, true God and true man, our humanity was taken to God. Christ opened the path to us. He is like a roped guide climbing a mountain who, on reaching the summit, pulls us up to him and leads us to God. If we entrust our life to him, if we let ourselves be guided by him, we are certain to be in safe hands, in the hands of our Savior.



—General Audience, April 17, 2013

REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- How can I put full trust in Jesus this week?
- How do faith, hope, and love (charity) enlighten and direct my life?

Looking for Trust

By Jim Auer

Our times are characterized by a crisis of trust. Our times say virtually no one is trustworthy—not your neighbors; not your employer or employees; not your clergy; not your elected representatives or anyone connected with government; not the police, your children’s teachers, your banker, or charities. It’s a grim outlook.

Tragically, too many civic leaders, business leaders, Church leaders, athletes, and entertainers have betrayed the trust placed in them. Their stories may seem to substantiate viewing the world with suspicion. But without trust, we can hardly follow Jesus. Mature, active discipleship is not for the skeptical or cynical. Throughout our lives, we are continually in trust-demanding situations. Trust is always a risk. Sometimes it’s negligible; sometimes it’s huge, and our very lives hang on it. But it’s always there. It’s similar to faith, which can never be proven.

Sometimes we set up stand-ins for trust, even in relationships where trust should be of the essence. For example, some fiancés don’t completely trust each other and desire to sign a prenuptial agreement. This deliberate reservation flies in the face of Christian love and our faith, which is why the Church all but forbids such an agreement in sacramental marriage (Canons 1102–03, *Catechism* 1648).

Automatic suspicion of others is really a broad form of prejudice by which people are presumed devious



and potentially dangerous until proven harmless. Trouble is, these are precisely the kind of people God often sends to enrich the Church. The *Catechism* defines rash judgment as an offense against truth and occurring when one, “even tacitly, assumes as true, without sufficient foundation, the moral fault of a neighbor...To avoid rash judgment, everyone should be careful to interpret insofar as possible his neighbor’s thoughts, words, and deeds in a favorable way” (*CCC* 2477–78).

Stereotyping, guilt by association, and bigotry affront the goodness of God. A suspicious, fearful view of the world is a stumbling block to putting faith into action and to seizing opportunities to minister to the poor and marginalized. Discipleship calls for listening to others in a spirit of charity and service.

Trust is an essential, God-given need built into our human nature. It is an element of love, which is how God is

defined. We long to trust and be trusted because we long for God. Inevitably the risks of trusting will make us uncomfortable and vulnerable, yet we are charged with sharing the faith and living ours out in the world. The rewards of trusting far outweigh the risks. The endless cycle of checking for any trace of treachery or mishap is tormenting.

A friend of mine offers three concrete, practical tips for fostering trust:

1. Learn all you can about the issue, person, or situation.
2. Pray—not a ten-second quickie, but a confident petition for discernment and wisdom—and take time to listen to God.
3. When dealing with others, gently and directly raise the issue of trust and mention the consequences of broken trust. Share your concerns and ask directly, “Can I fully trust you?” In some situations, a positive response can be expected before moving forward. †

Excerpted from *Liguorian*, May-June 2009

PRAYER

Risen Lord, your death, resurrection, and ascension are good news for us. Help me to share this message of hope with all people.

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

WEEKDAY READINGS

May 9–14

Mon. Easter Weekday:
Acts 19:1–8 / John 16:29–33
Tue. Easter Weekday:
Acts 20:17–27 / John 17:1–11a
Wed. Easter Weekday:
Acts 20:28–38 / John 17:11b–19

Thu. Easter Weekday:
Acts 22:30; 23:6–11 / John 17:20–26
Fri. Easter Weekday:
Acts 25:13b–21 / John 21:15–19
Sat. St. Matthias:
Acts 1:15–17, 20–26 / John 15:9–17

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