



Bringing Home the Word

Ascension of the Lord (B)
May 16, 2021

Sent to be Missionaries

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

The beginning of the Book of Acts presents a summary of the life of Christ and. How he called and taught the apostles in the Holy Spirit. After his resurrection, Christ kept the apostles in Jerusalem, where they prayed together with the Virgin and awaited the coming of the Holy Spirit which would give them power to witness to him beyond the city and into the outlying countries and regions, just as the Gospel reading commands.

This Spirit given to them by Christ is a spirit of mission and witness. When

Jesus was finished speaking, when his revelation had finished, he was taken to heaven. And the apostles were left standing there, looking up after him.

That looking up can be interpreted as a longing for Jesus' presence that was no longer in human form. Things had radically changed. Jesus' mission had finished, and now theirs was beginning. Their situation is the same as ours. We are sent on a mission!

An essential element of being Christian is to understand that we are sent into the world to build Christ's kingdom. We are his missionaries, his representatives. He counts on us to go into the world and bring his message to all his beloved children just as he did—with preaching, testimony, and love. Jesus doesn't send us to be comfortable, professionally successful, and wealthy. He sends us to be missionaries! +

Sunday Readings

Acts 1:1-11

When he had said this, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him from their sight.

Ephesians 1:17-23 or Ephesians 4:1-13 or 4:1-7, 11-13

I, then, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to live in a manner worthy of the call you have received, with all humility and gentleness.

Mark 16:15-20

[Jesus] said to them, "Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature."

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to go into the world
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A Word from Pope Francis

The Ascension tells us that Jesus, although he ascended to heaven to dwell gloriously at the right hand of the Father, is still and is always among us: this is the source of our strength, our perseverance, and our joy, from the presence of Jesus among us with the strength of the Holy Spirit.

—Ascension Sunday, May 24, 2020



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Do I live as if I am Christ's presence on earth, aware that I am his missionary?
- If Jesus were in my family, social, and professional situations, what would he do?

Not Right or Wrong—Just More

By Fr. Bruce Lewandowski, CSSR

When I was in the college seminary, a venerable old Redemptorist came for a visit and said, “I met the seminarians, and I am not impressed.” I heard other comments about “the seminarians” during my nine years in the seminary, but none as memorable as the one made by that aging Redemptorist concerned about the future of his beloved congregation.

Maybe Pope Francis’ comment that some seminarians are like “little monsters” was born out of the same kind of feeling—concern for the future of the Church. Most, if not all, Catholics at some point find themselves worrying about the future of the Church. So, we look to the future leaders of the Church—seminarians—to get some indication of where the Church might be headed.

A sense of eagerness was evident in most of the men during my time in the seminary. We were eager to serve God and God’s people, to bring people closer to Christ in the Church.

I sense a different direction or emphasis in some seminarians today. Certainly, they are eager to bring people closer to Christ and the Church, but there’s something else: They feel called to reform the Church. I’ve heard them say things like, “Nothing good happened after Vatican II” and “Vatican II was a mistake.”

Maybe some *Bringing Home the Word*

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readers feel the same way. Some of the criticism is focused on liturgical practice and the reform of the Mass, but there’s something else: the implication that there’s a right way—and a wrong way—to be Catholic.

Catholic is commonly understood to mean “universal.” *Universal* means “widely dispersed, present everywhere.”

Catholic also refers to a group of people set apart from others by their agreed-upon beliefs and practices.

I think most people, seminarians included, would agree with these two definitions and be content to stop here.

But there is still another definition: *Catholic* is how we live our faith in the world. *Catholic* means “elastic.” The Church stretches to welcome people of all kinds—and as many as possible. From the Church’s beginning, an inherent inclusivity enables saints and sinners, rich and poor, conservatives and liberals to be one in Jesus Christ. The Church by its very nature relates to everyone and everything. This is the Catholic Church described in the 1965 Vatican II document *Gaudium et Spes*, the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World.

As for seminarians and the future of the Church, St. Paul gives some solid advice: “To the weak I became weak, to win over the weak. I have become all things to all, to save at least some” (1 Corinthians 9:22).

There is no right or wrong way to be Catholic. We’re all just called to be more Catholic. +

**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 17–22

Monday, Easter Weekday:
Acts 19:1–8 / Jn 16:29–33

Tuesday, Easter Weekday:
Acts 20:17–27 / Jn 17:1–11a

Wednesday, Easter Weekday:
Acts 20:28–38 / Jn 17:11b–19

Thursday, Easter Weekday:
Acts 22:30; 23:6–11 / Jn 17:20–26

Friday, Easter Weekday:
Acts 25:13b–21 / Jn 21:15–19

Saturday, Easter Weekday:
Acts 28:16–20, 30–31 / Jn 21:20–25

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