



SUNDAY REFLECTION

“We will come to him and make our home with him.” It really is something overwhelming, this presence of God within each of us, especially when all too often we are not quite at home with ourselves. We can often be in flight from ourselves, maybe because deep down we don't like or accept ourselves, or we are unable to forgive ourselves, or may even despise ourselves and would prefer to escape and change everything. Many people do; many are unhappy, uneasy, and devoid of any true peace in themselves or have no hope in their future, and they are led into a tunnel of despair, self-harm and self-destruction.

And yet, Jesus is here saying, *“We will come to you and make our home with you.”* More than that, to us, ever insecure and restless as we are, Jesus also brings His peace, a peace that is so very different to the ‘peace’ we normally hear of, or experience in our lives, that is no more than a momentary shutting out of the habitual anxiety and chaos of life, a ‘bit of peace and quiet’ apart from the storm of daily life; or else it may be just an absence of conflict, a truce that is negotiated in our strained relationships with others a begrudging cease-fire of insults and bickering exchanges that are halted, but still bedevilled by suspicions and by cautious reserve on both sides;. These are unsatisfactory experiences of ‘peace’.

The peace that Jesus brings, when He finally enters our lives as a welcome and longed for guest, is something far deeper and more precious, instilling a sense of love and justice, of truth and mercy, an appreciation and understanding of our connectedness to one another as children of the same God. It is not something passive or static but is active and dynamic, and enduring. It strengthens and inspires us, here and now, giving us the grace and courage to stand up when necessary, and to sacrifice ourselves for what is right and just. The key to it is love, and is

accompanied by an obedience and a realistic adherence to God's word in faith. This is what makes of us a dwelling place, a household, a temple fit for God.

Not that we simply open the doorway of our hearts to this peace that He offers, and then all will be quiet and peaceful for us, a space where nothing or no-one can bother or disturb us. No, in the peace that Jesus brings, we will also find ourselves challenged and sent out, pushed out of ourselves. The peace that Christ gives is both dynamic and demanding, and if we open the door to it, we will not, of ourselves, be able to sustain it or bear it in our poverty and weakness. So, we do need the presence of His Holy Spirit, "the Father of the poor" (as Pope Francis calls Him) who becomes our protector, our advocate, our comforter, our teacher: who teaches us above all to listen, listen without prejudice or presumption. The Spirit reminds us constantly of the words of Jesus, words that become a light for our paths, indicating to us the ways of true peace ... as He did for the first disciples in that first council at Jerusalem. So, the Spirit's work is a work in progress, a continuum, because the peace of Christ, offered to us, must spread in and throughout the world; and that becomes part of our responsibility and work, right from the start, from our Baptism ... "till the ends of the earth revere Him" We will come to him and make our home with him". It is in hearing these words of Jesus, in heeding His teaching and putting His commands into practice, that we become "the household, the dwelling-place of God, ...of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

STEWARDSHIP: Today's reading from Revelation offers a vision of the City of God, the new Jerusalem. "But," the bishops' pastoral on stewardship reminds us, "that 'life to come' is in continuity with this present life through the human goods, the worthy human purposes, which people foster now."

READINGS THE ASCENSION

29 MAY '22

Acts 1:1-11: Here we see a bridge between the time of Jesus and the time of the Church. Jesus' departure is not a time of sadness for the disciples but a moment of joy as they acknowledge Him as the exalted Lord who will empower them for their mission.

Eph. 1:17-23: This passage contains a prayer that we will come to understand more fully all that has been revealed to us in the mystery of the death and resurrection of Jesus, and so live as people of hope.

Heb. 9:24-28; 10:19-23: Through the blood of Christ we have the right to enter the sanctuary.

Lk. 24:46-53: In these are last words from the Gospel of Luke, Jesus urges the disciples to trust that He is not so much leaving them as preparing for the outpouring of the Spirit which guarantees His powerful presence with them always.

ASCENSION WHAT? THURSDAY OR SUNDAY

The sixth week of Easter and the Seventh Sunday of Easter is a liturgical time with a bit of an identity crisis. This week was often referred to as Rogation Week before the revision of the calendar in 1969, and the Solemnity of the Ascension is traditionally celebrated on Thursday. But much of that has changed, or varies depending on where one lives.

Monday through Wednesday before Ascension Thursday marked the traditional minor Rogation days. [As I mentioned last week](#) the current [General Norms of the Liturgical Year and Calendar](#) which revised the Liturgical Calendar in 1969 did not abandon this liturgical tradition, but dates and celebration of Rogation Days is now determined on the local ordinary or authority.

Thursday will mark forty (40) days after the Resurrection. Depending where you live will determine whether you will celebrate [Ascension Thursday](#) or **Ascension Sunday**. In the United States, only the ecclesiastical provinces of Boston, Hartford, New York, Newark, Omaha, and Philadelphia continue observing Ascension Thursday as a holy day of obligation. Ecclesiastical provinces usually follow state lines, but some provinces cover more than one state. So 1/5 of the states celebrate Ascension Thursday: Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, Nebraska, and Pennsylvania.

I'm not writing to question the pastoral reasons for moving the solemnity to Sunday and removing the obligation, but making the case that if we follow the liturgy of the Church, even if the Ascension is moved to Sunday, we need to observe the Ascension on Thursday in small ways.

Liturgical Traces of the Ascension

Moving the Ascension to Sunday requires some adjusting of the liturgy to have options "before the Ascension" and "after the Ascension." There is shuffling of Mass propers, readings and a different set of Collect prayers. The Liturgy of the Hours also provides different prayers for before and after the Ascension. But even with all these adjustments, there are "liturgical remnants" that still point to Ascension celebrating on Thursday.

The liturgy from Thursday to Saturday, particularly the readings, reflect the celebration of the Ascension, with Jesus returning to His Father and seated at His right hand. (Since the feast of the Visitation falls this Friday this will not be completely obvious this year.) The Mass readings for the Sixth Week of Easter Sunday through Wednesday refer to the coming of the Paraclete, but Thursday through Saturday refer to the Ascension, with Christ returning to his Father. Some of the passages aren't speaking of the Ascension outright, but do contain traces:

- a. The Responsorial Psalm is Psalm 47 for the Mass of the Ascension: *"God mounts His throne to shouts of joy: a blare of trumpets for the Lord."* The same Psalm 47 is repeated with a different antiphon for Friday and Saturday.
- b. Alleluia verse on Thursday: *"I will not leave you orphans, says the Lord; I will come back to you, and your hearts will rejoice."*
- c. Gospel Thursday (non-Ascension) from John 16:16: *"A little while and you will no longer see me, and again a little while later and you will see me....'Because I am going to the Father'."*
- d. Alleluia verse on Friday: *"Christ had to suffer and to rise from the dead, and so enter into his glory."*
- e. Alleluia verse and Gospel on Saturday John 16:28: *"I came from the Father and have come into the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father."*

The Liturgy of the Hours also points to the traditional Ascension Thursday:

- a. Thursday's Antiphon for the Canticle of Zechariah: *"In a little while you will no longer see me, says the Lord; then a little while later you will see me again, since I am going to the Father, alleluia."*

- b. Thursday's reading from 1 Peter 3:18-22: *"He went to heaven is at God's right hand, with angelic rulers and powers subjected to him."*
- c. Friday's Antiphon for the Canticle of Zechariah: *"Because he suffered death, we see Jesus crowned with glory and honor, alleluia."*

THE MASS

THE OFFERTORY Cont.

The offering of bread and wine to the priest reminds us to place our own hearts on the altar to be transformed.

When attending Mass on Sunday, typically members of the congregation will be chosen to present bread and wine to the priest while he prepares the altar for the prayers of consecration.

While it may seem at first glance to be a type of intermission, this is in fact a liturgical action with a long history and deep symbolism.

The Catholic Encyclopedia simply states, "Originally at this moment the people brought up bread and wine which were received by the deacons and placed by them on the altar." **Members of the local congregation were normally in charge of baking the bread and acquiring wine**, so this served as a practical time within the liturgy for the necessary elements for Mass to be presented.

Nikolaus Gehr in his *Holy Sacrifice of the Mass* explains part of the symbolism of this act. *In the first place, the oblation (oblatio) relates to the Eucharistic elements: **the bread and wine are withdrawn from common use**, consecrated to God and previously sanctified, that they may be in a manner prepared and made fit for their unspeakably exalted destiny. **We give up all claim to these earthly gifts** and offer them to the Most High, with the intention and desire that He would change them in the course of the Sacrifice into the most holy Body and Blood of Christ.*

The faithful are encouraged at this time to join the offering in a spiritual way and **place our own hearts on the altar**, so that we might be transformed in a mystical way into the "body" of Christ.

*To partake of this food of God, to sit at this banquet of love, all indeed are invited; but among the attending guests, the honored and preferred are the "poor" in spirit, the humble and the lowly, — in short, **all that have emptied their hearts** and divested them of the love of the goods of this earth, and who, therefore, hunger and thirst after the imperishable food of heaven. These "poor in spirit will eat" at the table of the Lord and be "filled."*

After the gifts are assembled on the altar, the priest recalls this symbolism in the dialogue that follows.

*Priest: **Lift up your hearts.***

People: We lift them up to the Lord.

LITURGICAL SCHEDULE SIXTH WEEK OF EASTER

21 - 29 MAY 2022

- Saturday 21 May Easter Weekday 5 m St. Christopher Magallanes**
8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of Day, Easter Preface II, Eucharistic Prayer II
9:30 – 12:00 Baptisms
1:30 – 4:30 p.m. Confessions
5:00 p.m. Vigil Mass 6th Sunday of Easter
Proper of Day, Gloria, Creed, Easter Preface I, Eucharistic Prayer III
(Intention:)
- Sunday 22 Mar Sixth Sunday of Easter**
7:00 a.m. Mass Proper of Day, Gloria, Creed, Easter Preface I, Eucharistic Prayer III
(Intention: Parish of St. Stephen, Martyr)
8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of Day, Gloria, Creed, Easter Preface I, Eucharistic Prayer III
(Intention: Lee Cross RIP)
11:30 a.m. Mass Proper of Day, Gloria, Creed, Easter Preface I, Eucharistic Prayer III
(Intention: Joan Thomas RIP)
2:00 p.m. Brig Mass
- Monday 23 May Day Off**
6:00 p.m. MEETING
- Tuesday 24 May Easter Weekday 6**
8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of Day, Easter Preface II, Eucharistic Prayer II
(Intention:)
- Wednesday 25 May Easter Weekday 6 m St. Bede, Priest & Doctor, Gregory VII, Pope, Mary Magdalene de Pazzi**
6:30 a.m. Mass Proper of the Saint, Easter Preface III, Eucharistic Prayer III
(Intention:)
7:00 – 8:00 a.m. Confessions
8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of the Saint, Easter Preface III, Eucharistic Prayer III
(Intention:)
12:00 p.m. Mass Portsmouth Naval Hospital
- Thursday 26 May Traditional Feast of Ascension M St. Philip Neri**
8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of the Saint, Preface Holy Pastors, Eucharistic Prayer III
(Intention:)
2:00 p.m. Meeting Capital Campaign
5:00 – 6:30 p.m. Confessions
6:30 p.m. Mass Proper of the Saint, Preface Holy Pastors, Eucharistic Prayer III
- Friday 27 May Easter Weekday 6 m St. Augustine of Canterbury**
8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of Saint, Easter Preface V, Eucharistic Prayer III
(Intention:)
12:00 p.m. Portsmouth Naval Hospital Mass
5:00 – 7:00 p.m. Adoration & Confessions
- Saturday 28 May Easter Weekday 6**
8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of Day, Easter Preface II, Eucharistic Prayer II
1:30 – 4:30 p.m. Confessions
5:00 p.m. Vigil Mass of the Ascension

Proper of Feast, Gloria, Creed, Preface Ascension I, Eucharistic Prayer I

Sunday 29 May Solemnity of the Ascension of Our Lord

7:00 a.m. Mass Proper of Day, Gloria, Creed, Preface Ascension I, Eucharistic Prayer II

8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of Day, Gloria, Creed, Preface Ascension I, Eucharistic Prayer I

11:30 a.m. Mass Proper of Day, Gloria, Creed, Preface Ascension I, Eucharistic Prayer I

2:00 p.m. Mass Brig