



Some reflections inspired by online copyrighted commentaries and homilies

May 29, 2022

Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord

I think all of us have in our minds a picture of the Ascension of Jesus. Christ is lifted-up through the clouds to take a seat at the right hand of the Father. I have always been struck by what I hear in our first reading from the Book of Acts to what happens after the Ascension. Two men appear to the disciples and say, ***“Men of Galilee, why are you standing looking up into the sky?”*** After all that Jesus had told them and prescribed that he would be “taken up”, Jesus ascended through the sky to return to the Father, and yet they just stand there. They are resembling bewildered children, looking for Jesus in the sky and looking in the wrong place. This Gospel directs our attention to look in a different way, telling us that we are to look for the risen Christ not in the clouds but in the situations of our own lives.

The question we may have is where in our everyday lives should we look for Jesus? May I suggest three places we can look immediately with no formal theological study. We can look in the joys experienced through our lives, in the many times we needed the Lord on our journeys of faith, and in blessed opportunities that has been placed on our path to holiness. Looking for Jesus in the joys of our lives is looking in the easiest place. When we watch our children or grandchildren play, when we embrace the person that we love, when we reflect upon the goodness and the faithfulness of our family and friends, the risen Jesus is there. But it is important for us to recognize his presence in all things. The good things in our lives do not come to us because of luck or good fortune. They come from the love of God blessing us on our journey to him.

Jesus can also be found in the many needs around us. When someone in our family needs our help, when someone at work needs our assistance, when someone needs us to listen to them, we should expect to find Jesus during it all. When we reach out to help the poor and the homeless, when we reach out to give to others, like through our food pantry. Jesus often uses those moments to give to back to us in grace. We know from experience that we always receive more than we give. The risen Christ will bless us abundantly when we help others. We know that Jesus is present in our lives, and not in the clouds. Jesus can be found in the many opportunities of our lives, opportunities for hope and peace, opportunities for healing and health.

We can find ourselves devastated by the loss of someone through death, through divorce, or through misunderstanding. We simply cannot imagine our lives ever being normal again. It is then that we should look for Christ in opportunities of hope. The opportunity to have lunch with a friend, the opportunity to serve our brothers and sisters less fortunate, or the opportunity to visit with our family, the elderly, the sick, all these are grace moments that Jesus uses to acknowledge his fullness in our life.

On this feast of the Ascension, we should look for the risen Christ in our joys, in the needs around us, and in the opportunities for hope and healing. It does no good to stand looking up into the sky. Christ is to be found in the everyday moments of life. We might receive a kind note in the mail, a chance meeting in the supermarket, a welcome or smile to those we encounter, might be just the moment that Christ reveals himself to us. Let us not be like the disciples looking up in the sky for Jesus. But to watch for those opportunities and seize those moments when Jesus is in our midst.