

# From the Pastor's Printer

## Preparing a Place for Us and Us for the Place

The feasts of the Ascension of the Lord and Pentecost do not simply celebrate events that happened to Jesus in his Ascent into heaven or by Jesus in the giving of the Holy Spirit, but are also just as much events that happened to the Church. I think it is worth reflecting on these feasts.

The Ascension is the return of Christ to his Father to take his place in glory at God's right hand. It is not, however, a retirement after a grueling job well done (although he certainly deserves it), but rather the way in which the Church is meant to live in relationship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Jesus ascended into heaven to prepare a place for us (Jn 14: 2). Through the Paschal Mystery, Christ has thrown open the gates of the heavenly Kingdom to all who believe. He left his disciples through death to accomplish this, but returned in glory to show forth the power of God's love; a love that conquered sin and death, and to lead them to see that He is indeed the first born from the dead. He left them as God made human in all things but sin, and He returned to them as God made human who now has transformed His and all believers' humanity into an everlasting life of glory with God. This is shown in his appearances to his disciples where it is clear that He is still Jesus of Nazareth, but transformed beyond the limitations of this present world. He has been glorified by the Father. He went and prepared a place for us.

But there is to be another leaving which takes place when Christ leaves us in visible form

ascending in glory to the Father. We might see this as Jesus going to prepare for us a place in His Father's house. Jesus' ascent to glory is not so much about Him leaving us, but more so about giving us a new way to live in Him that will bring us to the heavenly kingdom. By His death and resurrection He changed our destiny, and the destiny of those who live on after us, from eternal separation from the Father to the original intent of the Father before Adam's sin; that we be always in communion – loving unity with Him and one another. In His resurrection he continues this work by setting the scene for His Holy Spirit to come upon us and bring us into unity with Himself in and through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which occurred on Pentecost and continues to this very day. In this, He is with us by dwelling in us, transforming our humanity with his divinity. By dwelling in us, He calls us to surrender ourselves to Himself, not an ego trip on his part, but because that is the only way we fully become whom we are meant to be. By his and the Holy Spirit's presence working in us, we learn how to be Christ to the world around us. We learn to love as Christ loves; we learn to become part of the offering of Christ to the Father, and we give ourselves over to the love of Christ. In this we are becoming learned and practicing citizens of the Kingdom He has prepared for us. None of this can we do on our own steam; it is only through the surrender of ourselves that this is accomplished within us. Christ's ascent into glory is indeed a change in the way He is present to us; but not in His presence in and of itself. By the gift of the Holy Spirit which we celebrate next Sunday, we know that a place is prepared for us and we are prepared for the place.

**Congratulations** to all mothers of any form and love for being a loving sign of God's love for us.

**Congratulations** to all the youth of our parish who were confirmed this past week.

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