

Sunday May 16, 2021

## **Ascension of Our Lord Parishioner Reflection**

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As Jesus was being crucified his apostles watched from afar, their heads fully covered to prevent recognition. When the dead body of Jesus was removed from the cross and placed in a tomb, the eleven gathered in an upper room, doors locked and bolts in place, terrified that they too were about to suffer the same fate as their Master and teacher. A few days later, Jesus suddenly appeared among them. Locked doors could not keep the Spirit of Jesus entering. In this glorious state they hardly recognised Him. Knowing this He retained the nail marks in his hands and the injury where the soldier's spear entered His side. Jesus now taught them of the beauty, richness and glory of the Kingdom of Heaven. This must be the goal for all. He then said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole of creation." We also know from today's readings that Jesus ordered them not to leave Jerusalem until they were baptized with the Holy Spirit. You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and to the ends of the earth. Jesus then left as He had come.

Now, alone again, they were left to ponder the words of Jesus. "You will be my witness in Jerusalem." How can this be possible? These were the people who only a few days ago put Jesus to death. These are the people who were looking for His followers and we are the people who denied Him. Now He asks us to witness to Jerusalem and to the ends of the earth. Fear had returned to this small group of Christians. Suddenly, the room was filled with a great light. Tongues of fire appeared over the head of each one of them symbolizing sacrifice. The spirit of each apostle was completely absorbed by the Holy Spirit. These men had once again become the apostles that Jesus taught. Without fear, with great resolve and being filled with the Holy Spirit, they were now ready to launch out into the world at the request of Jesus to spread the good news.

Outside the city there were several large tent encampments, traveling traders who came in huge camel trains. These were a nomadic people who moved with their entire families from town to town buying, selling and exchanging goods. They brought beautiful carpets, spices, cloths, silks and everything people of desert cities may require. With so many visitors Jerusalem was alive with music and dance in the many bazaars round the city.

It was now that the doors of the upper room were thrown open. Eleven men filled with the Holy Spirit, walked quietly into the city, they immediately dispersed that the Word of God might be heard by many.

As the apostles returned each night to the upper room they were amazed at the huge numbers of people from the city and the camps around the city who were keen to hear the Word of God. The apostles healed their sick and through the Holy Spirit taught the word of God. For weeks, the new Christians came to worship with the apostles, their numbers had grown to such an extent that even the authorities became increasingly worried.

It was now time for the large caravans to move on, plying their trade in other towns and cities throughout the middle east, they would now be paying more than goods, they would be spreading the word of God. The apostles must have now given thought to the words of Jesus. "Witness to Jerusalem and to the ends of the earth." (Our God must be very smart!)

The apostles noted that with the exponential growth of the Christian faith a solid structure must be implemented to accommodate this rate of growth. St. Peter immediately took charge, sending his fellow apostles out into the world to be the witnesses for Jesus

Today we have the Pope, Bishops and priests shepherding and teaching the Word to the ends of the world. ---- Talk about a miracle?