

The Ascension means happy ending of our Christian life – Solemnity of Ascension of our Lord Sunday May 24th, 2020. (Acts 1;1-11, Ephesians 1;17-23, Matthew 28;16-20)

Dear brothers and sisters, if you ask me what movie I like to watch, I will say I like to watch a movie with a happy ending. Again, if you ask me what book I like to read, I will again say I like a story book with a happy ending. Today we celebrate the feast of the ascension, the happy ending of all the stories about Jesus' life, suffering, death and resurrection. This tells us that Jesus' enemies, his suffering and death did not have the last word in his life. Jesus has finally overcome all of them today by ascending to his Father with glory and power.

Today's Feast of Ascension actually fell on last Thursday but as one of the movable solemnities, it can be moved to the following Sunday which is today. In our first reading from the Acts of the apostles, Luke tells us that the Ascension took place 40 days after the risen Lord walked on earth. After 40 days of appearing to his disciples, teaching and promising them of the coming of the Holy Spirit, Jesus finally ascended into heaven to enter into his Father's glory. This is indeed a very happy ending of a life well lived by our Saviour. Jesus has now accomplished his mission and now returns to the Father.

Dear friends, the Feast of Ascension is meant to testify and assure us Christians that Christianity is not a myth, but a faith that is based on solid facts. The apostle John speaking of Jesus' resurrection and ascension says, "we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us." (1John 1;1-4.) Probably the ascension is one of the neglected parts of Jesus' life which we seldom teach about at the pulpit. But it is very important because

without the ascension of Jesus Christ, his redemptive work of salvation will not be complete.

Our gospel according to Matthew tells us that the ascension does not mean Jesus has gone away from us. Just before his ascension, Jesus entrusted to the apostles the great commission to go to the whole world to continue the work of the Kingdom. Though Jesus will no longer be visibly present to us, but he concluded his command by saying, ‘behold, I am with you always to the close of the age.’ Jesus will be with us strengthening and guiding us through the power of the Holy Spirit. The 2nd reading from Ephesians, reminds us that it is the Spirit of wisdom that can enlighten us to hope in Jesus’ abiding presence with us.

Brothers and sisters, we too have spent the past 40 days and over in seclusion, self-quarantine and lockdowns because of the global pandemic and we are gradually returning to public worship. This returning to worship together and the rest to come, will surely be a happy ending for us all after the sad situations we have been in for several months. Following the angels’ instruction after the Ascension, the disciples returned to Jerusalem to begin their novena prayer to the Holy Spirit with our Mother Mary. Today, we are on day 3 of our novena to the Holy Spirit. May we be strengthened by the Holy Spirit and may He fill our hearts with the hope that where Christ has gone before us in glory, we may also follow in hope. **Amen**

By Fr Emmanuel Subaar