

## The Ascension

Acts 1:1-11; Luke 24: 46-53 – May 8, 2016

The readings this week are very specific to the feast we celebrate, the Ascension of the Lord. We hear from two of the New Testament accounts, one from the gospel of Luke. The other reading is from the Acts of the Apostles.

The interesting point is that these two scripture passages were written by the same author. To look at the gospel of Luke one must look at it as a “two-volume” edition. Luke ends his gospel with the Ascension and begins the book of Acts with the same account. For Luke, the earthly Jesus has come full circle. Jesus came from the Father, he lived among humanity giving us a new way to live (love each other) and now has returned to his rightful place in heaven, the fullness of glory. For Luke, Jesus is equal to the Father. These accounts are more than eye-witness proof of this event. The Ascension is a truth that has far reaching theological underpinnings for us.

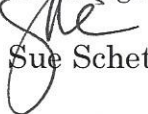
We say in both the Apostles’ Creed and the Nicene Creed that **“He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father/God”** This is a core belief of the Catholic faith. Jesus came to teach us how to be human, suffered an agonizing death, rose from the dead and then ascended into heaven. We say one form of the creed every Sunday of the liturgical year. We do so as to not forget the importance of the Ascension in our lives as baptized Christians.

The time of the earthly Jesus has passed. It is now the time of the Holy Spirit and the Church. It is now our time to be **“my witnesses”**. The work that Jesus established on earth, to feed the poor, care for the less fortunate, and bring peace upon all things, is our responsibility now. We are called by the ascension, Jesus’ physical departure from earth, to take up the work that he began, bringing both his Church and the work he inaugurated into our own time.

How are we to accomplish this work in a world still full of hate, evil and disorder? How can simple human beings change the course of the world toward peace and love at a time of on-going mistrust and conflict?

In the Acts of the Apostles, Jesus promises that **“you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and the ends of the earth.”** Jesus sits at the right hand of God, a position of power over the earth. Jesus reigns over the world and the Church through the workings of the Holy Spirit. It is through the grace of the Spirit that we, as followers of Christ, are called to do his work, trusting in him to provide the grace of the Spirit to fulfill the will of God.

Blessings!

  
Sue Schettler