

Jesus Had Ordered Them

The Ascension of the Lord- May 28, 2017

The opening line for this week's gospel paints, for me, a very different image of our Lord. "The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them." I have to admit that my image of Jesus tends to be one in which he is soft-spoken and gentle. Matthew seems to give us the image of Jesus as one who is tough in the way a parent is tough...That is, in some cases... you don't have a choice. Just go get it done!

This somewhat severe image is tempered with the fullness of the all three readings this week as we celebrate Jesus' ascension into heaven. Jesus has assembled his disciples for one last pep talk. He is specific in what they (we) are to do. "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."

For Christians this command is not some sweet, gentle request. Rather, it is our job description for Christian service. We are to go forth to love and serve the Lord and each other. Isn't that what is said at the end of Mass? Go! Get out of here! Go renew the earth with your witness of faith which has been strengthened in the sacrament of Eucharist which we have celebrated together as community.

How many of us take this seriously? How many of us really think about this on a daily basis? It's un-nerving to think that Jesus has given us this much responsibility. We have a responsibility to show the world that good not evil will prevail and that justice and peace outweigh evil and violence.

I'm a little unsure of this expectation. How can I make a difference in the world? How can I help others come to Christ, turn their lives around? I can't! I can't do any of it without Christ. It is through Christ and the grace of the Holy Spirit that I can roll out of bed in the morning and put two feet on the floor.

There is no need for concern over this truth. Jesus makes this promise. "And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age." So Jesus is tough. Jesus is demanding in respect to what he has "ordered" us to do. We cannot be backseat Christians. We must drive the changes that we know are needed in this world. You heard him... GO!

Blessings!


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