

Feast of the Ascension – Cycle A
Homily by Fr. Hugo L. Blotsky, O.S.B.
May 24, 2020

- I. Every year, on the Sunday of the last week in May, the priests and brothers that are members of our monastery at Assumption Abbey in Richardton, ND gather for an annual spiritual retreat for 5 days. This evening, the retreat is beginning and I won't be attending. I will be back at the monastery from mid-June until mid-July when I will be making a private retreat.

- II. One topic of conversation that is of concern to many people is the lack of rain in Wyoming this time of the year. Farmers, ranchers and gardeners need the rain as it is the planting and seeding season.
 - A. Some years, we get too much rain in the spring time. In addition to all the rain, the snow melt off in Montana and Wyoming causes flooding of homes, business places and fields along the Yellowstone River, the Missouri River, Wind River, and Pogo Agie.

 - B. When natural disasters such as flooding or drought causes us problems, it gives us an opportunity to reflect upon the Creator and creation.

 - C. God is in control of the universe, and He is in control of everything in the universe. Nothing can happen unless God either wills it to happen or allows it to happen.
 - 1. Everything in the universe is unfolding according to the plan of God, and within the design of God.
 - 2. When natural disasters happen, some believe that is a sign that God is punishing us.
 - 3. Maybe natural disasters are signs from God showing us that nature needs to be respected and that we shouldn't be tampering with nature, nor should we try to control nature.
 - 4. From our perspective, floods and storms are destructive and harmful to human life.
 - 5. Maybe from God's perspective, floods and storms are carrying out the purposes for which they were created.

 - D. If we want to better understand why these natural disasters are happening, and why God is allowing them, then we need to go to the Creator to ask Him our questions.

- III. This Sunday, we celebrate the Feast of the Ascension. We are reminded that when Jesus returned to God the Father after His Resurrection from the dead, He did not abandon us, or leave us orphans. He told His disciples to go to Jerusalem to pray and to wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit.**
- A. When Jesus told His disciples that it was necessary for Him to die so that He could return to the Father, the disciples became sorrowful. When someone we love leaves us through separation or death, the natural response is to grieve that loss.**
- B. For the disciples, the loss was great. They had seen Jesus heal the sick and comfort the sorrowful. If one of the disciples were to get sick while Jesus was gone, who would heal the sick person?**
- 1. The disciples had seen Jesus raise the dead back to life again. If one of the disciples were to die, or one of their loved ones were to die, who would raise the dead loved one back to life?**
 - 2. Jesus had fed crowds with the multiplication of bread and fish when they were hungry. Jesus knew how to satisfy their physical hunger and their spiritual hunger. With Jesus being physically absent, who could they turn to in the midst of their hunger?**
 - 3. Jesus forgave sinners, and He set free those bound up by evil spirits. In the absence of Jesus, who would be able to forgive sins and to set free those bound by evil spirits?**
 - 4. Jesus had a way of reaching out to public sinners and making them feel that they belonged among His followers. With Jesus gone, who would be around to extend a welcoming hand in friendship to those who felt rejected by society?**
- C. Jesus returned to the Father so that He could send us the Holy Spirit. Jesus promised His disciples that when the Holy Spirit comes, the Spirit will comfort and strengthen His people. The Spirit will teach us everything Jesus said and did during His three years of public ministry.**
- D. Until the coming of the Holy Spirit, the disciples were to pray and to wait trusting that Jesus had not abandoned them, trusting that the Holy Spirit would come, trusting that the followers of Jesus would not be disappointed while they waited, and trusting that they would see something greater after the Holy Spirit comes upon them.**
- E. During this time of praying and waiting for the Holy Spirit, the disciples were to work through their grieving the absence of Jesus.**
- 1. The Risen Lord Jesus had told Mary Magdalen at the tomb that she shouldn't cling on to Him, but to let Him go.**

2. In our own grieving, we need to find a way to let go of our loved ones who have died so that they can rest in peace, and so that we can find peace of mind.
 3. Letting go of deceased loved ones does not mean that we try to forget them, but that we give ourselves the freedom to move on with our life without our loved ones, even though that may be very painful.
- F. During this period of prayer and waiting for the Holy Spirit, the disciples were to prepare themselves for what was to happen next. Jesus didn't die one day, rise from the dead the next day, ascend to Father the following day, and then sent Holy Spirit the next day.
- G. Jesus was crucified and died on the Cross one day. The third day He rose from the dead. Forty days later He ascended to the Father. After 9 days of waiting and praying for the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit descended upon the Apostles.
1. Everything happened in God's timing, not in man's timing.
- H. Through prayer and waiting, we can see things from God's perspective. Ultimately, everything is in God's hands. We have nothing to fear.
- I. Waiting upon the Lord can sometimes demand much patience from us. The word "patience" comes from a Latin word that means to suffer. A patient is one who suffers. When we are patient, we may be suffering but we can also grow and learn from the process of waiting.
- J. When we become impatient, we are letting others know that we don't like to suffer, to wait, to learn from the process of waiting. The impatient person wants things to happen now. The impatient person wants things to happen on man's timing, and not on God's timing.
- K. Today, we celebrate the Feast of the Ascension. We are asked to pray and to wait for a fresh and new out-pouring of the Holy Spirit as we celebrate the Feast of Pentecost next Sunday.
- L. Great blessings are promised to those who wait upon the Lord.