

24 May 2020 - Homily - Ascension of Our Lord

Acts 1:1-11 MT 28:16-20

By: Fr. Paul Magyar

The gospel of Matthew emphasizes that only the eleven were present to witness Jesus' ascension into heaven. This allude's to Judas' sorry end. The mountain where Jesus ascends from is the mountain of revelation. This is the same mountain where earlier in 17:1 Jesus was transfigured before James, John and Peter; and He was talking with Moses and Elijah. Jesus appearance is emphasized as shining and dazzling white at the transfiguration. While during His ascension it is Jesus' words rather than his appearance is emphasized. The disciples worship shows their faith, however it is mixed with doubt, a common psychological experience which gives hope to modern people.

Acts of the apostles explains that Jesus was lifted up into heaven by a cloud. The cloud is the Shekinah, the divine presence of God. It is the embracing arms of God the Father picking up his son, Jesus into His arms and bringing him up to himself. The archetypical reality of the importance of love and family.

Jesus commissions his disciples to go forth and make disciples. The way they are to do this is to go to all the nations of the world. It is a universal call to holiness and discipleship. They are to baptize all the nations of the world that accept Christ in the Trinitarian formula of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. An important detail is that no circumcision is mentioned as being necessary.

The disciples are to carry out Jesus' teaching ministry, laying out the foundation of theology, education and intellectual work. They will not be doing this alone because Jesus promises that he will be with them always. Jesus is Emanuel, God with us, the divine presence which is the Shekinah that is present when people pray, teach, preach, sanctify and baptize. Jesus is with them until the end of the age which is the coming of the Kingdom of God.

All this ministerial work of Jesus and the disciples is in order to prepare the world for the reception of the future kingdom of God. We cannot build the kingdom the same way we cannot make a season. We cannot make summer or winter happen, we prepare for summer and winter. And then when the season arrives, we receive it. The same way we prepare ourselves for the kingdom of God and receive it as a gift when it arrives. Praying for all of you. Fr. Paul Magyar

