

Ascension – May 16 – Hispanic Service

We give praise and thanks to you Jesus for the wonders you do among us.

Over the years when I have prayed over the Ascension, I have always had difficulty grasping its significance. I have imagined that I was there with the Apostles, and not felt particularly joyful, nor have I understood.

The Apostles have spent a wondrous time with Jesus. They have heard his teaching, and watched him heal, reach out to the poor and outcasts, stretch the minds of the religious leaders of the time, and so much more. Then he was taken from them and died a horrible death. They were devastated. But then he arose from death and once again they could see him, hear him, touch him, and even watch him eat. What incredible joy! He is back with them!

But then after all this, Jesus gathers them, says goodbye and leaves them again. Why do we celebrate this?

I would like to remind you of the ending of Matthew's Gospel. Jesus tells the Apostles that he will be with them and with us for all time. We may not be able to see him or touch him, but he is with us. He is with each of us. He is with us as a community of faith gathered here at San Lucas. He is with each other person in this church. And he is with people all over North America, South America, Africa, Europe, and Asia. He is no longer like us earthly humans, limited in time and space, but he is the glorified Jesus able to be with all of us, anywhere, any time.

Jesus is with us in our worries and fears and struggles and failings. Jesus is with us in our joys and peace and success and fun. I love the thought of Jesus sharing our fun. I read a blog posting a week or so ago by a man who was imagining Jesus riding a bike alongside him, feeling the warmth of the sun and the movement of the breeze, and smiling and laughing.

Our difficulty with all of this is not whether or not Jesus is in fact with us, but that we are not sufficiently aware of his presence. We need to become more and more aware that he is with us. Jesus is with us! Praise God! Open your eyes, ears, minds, and hearts and know that he is with you.

There is a second aspect to Jesus' ascension. Jesus returns to the Father to send the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus. We will celebrate this next week on the Feast of Pentecost, and you will hear more about the coming of the Holy Spirit. I would just like to say that yes, we first receive the Holy Spirit in Baptism as the Apostles first received the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. However, it is a lifetime process to accept the inspiration, wisdom, courage, patience, love, and so much more that the Spirit brings us.

I want to focus on the presence of Jesus, right here, right now, today. In a short time we will celebrate the Holy Communion. This is a very special way that Jesus is with us

today. He gives us his body and his blood, and in so doing enters our minds and hearts. Take a few moments after communion to thank him for being with you and to recognize that he is also with your brothers and sisters gathered here today. And as you leave the church today be sure to keep in mind that Jesus is with you and will remain with you.

And take some time this week to pray and remember what we celebrate next Sunday, the coming of the Holy Spirit. Tell Jesus in prayer that you are ready to receive those gifts that the Holy Spirit chooses to bring you.