

Ascension Sunday Year A 24 May 2020

Introduction:

The entire Easter season engages us with the paradox of Jesus' presence and absence.

On Easter Day, once Jesus revealed himself in the supper at Emmaus he disappeared from the disciples' sight. On Ascension Day Jesus' appearance to the apostle's heralds both his withdrawal and his constant presence. The gift of the Spirit (on Easter Day in John, 50 days later in Luke) brings some resolution but the tension remains.

Vatican II drew attention to the multiple modes of Christ's active presence – in word and sacrament, in believers and the poor – but our grasp of this truth seems underdeveloped. Paul's exuberant prayer in Ephesians bears witness to the wealth that lies in store for us.

The Ascension is not simply something that happened to Jesus – his departure, physically, from this world. It is the feast that celebrates the hope that evil and all that makes for dehumanisation and death in our world will not have the last word.

Priest: Dear friends, as Jesus returned in glory to God's right hand, he commissioned his disciples to proclaim the good news to all. In that spirit let us pray for the needs of the whole world.

- For the human family. May the trauma of the coronavirus pandemic fuel our determination to work together for a new world of justice and peace. **(Pause)** We pray to the Lord.
- For the church on this World Communications Day. May we heed Pope Francis' call to tell God's story and our story without ceasing. **(Pause)** We pray to the Lord.
- We join with all Christians praying for church unity this week. May churches around the globe be one in the generous hospitality they offer the wayfarers of the world. **(Pause)** We pray to the Lord.
- For the church in Australia. May Mary, Help of Christians, be our companion and guide through the troubled times in which we live. **(Pause)** We pray to the Lord.
- For the people of Australia. May National Sorry Day and Reconciliation Week advance our truthful acceptance of the past and our desire for a new and united future. **(Pause)** We pray to the Lord.
- For all who have despaired of life and for those they leave in unending grief. May their pain impel us to open our hearts in support of the deeply troubled. **(Pause)** We pray to the Lord.
- For the recently deceased and for those whose anniversary of death occurs around this time. May they inherit the rich glories promised the saints. **(Pause)** We pray to the Lord.

Priest: Father of Jesus and God of glory, your Son promised to be with us to the end of time. May we live by his truth and rejoice in his love. We ask this through Christ, our risen Lord.