



INTRODUCTION

Talk about experience of someone special saying goodbye.

How do you feel when someone you love very much has to leave and go away?

How do you think the disciples felt when Jesus went to be with his father again?



OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray

[on this day of Ascension

as we watch and wait for Jesus' return]

Father in heaven,

our minds were prepared

for the coming of your kingdom

when you took Christ beyond our sight

so that we might seek him in glory.

May we follow where he has led

and find our hope in his glory,

for he is Lord forever. Amen

(New Saint Joseph Sunday Missal)



PHASE ONE REMEMBER THE STORY OF JESUS

Proclamation of the Gospel Story Mark 16:15-20

Enthroned the Bible on a table with lighted candle)

A moment of prayerful silence

We will not be able to understand the Word of God unless God himself opens our hearts. Let us now welcome Jesus as he speaks to us through his Word.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Go and teach all nations, says the Lord;

I am with you always, until the end of the world.

Alleluia, alleluia

Reader: A reading from the Gospel according to Mark

All: Praise be to you Lord Jesus Christ



15 And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation. 16 The one who believes and is baptized will be saved; but the one who does not believe will be

condemned. 17 And these signs will accompany those who believe: by using my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; 18 they will pick up snakes in their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them;

they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover."

9 So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. 20 And they went out and proclaimed the good news everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that accompanied it.

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

1.2 Brief Guided silent Meditation / Personal Prayer

Text in Context

Following the Sunday readings, we have seen how Jesus worked with his disciples going around Galilee and neighboring towns to make known the love of the Father by his words and actions. People did not believe him, though a group of disciples followed him. He was crucified but rose from the dead. He appeared to his disciples several times, like any other persons among them, though in a different form. But after 40 days of his resurrection, upon giving them important instruction, he went up to heaven.

What is the instruction of Jesus before he departs from his disciples? (Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature.)

1. Who are those who believe in Jesus? Who are the baptized?
2. What signs will be given to those who believe?
3. Soon after Jesus spoke to his disciples, what happened to Jesus?
4. Can you imagine Jesus in heaven as he is described? (took his seat at the right hand of God.)
5. What did the disciples do after Jesus has gone to heaven? (went forth and preached everywhere.)
6. What did the Lord do for them as they went to do his command? (the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word through accompanying signs.)

PHASE II REFLECT the Story of the Church (Teachings of the Church)



Among the Gospel writers, Mark gives us a clearer picture of what Ascension is.

The Lord Jesus ... was taken up into heaven and took his seat at the right hand of God (Mk 16:19).

What does Ascension mean?

The text says Jesus was taken up to heaven. Heaven points out to something divine.

Today's celebration, the Ascension of the Lord, we rejoice at his going back to the Father.

We profess this faith when we pray this part of the Creed **"is seated at the right hand of the Father."**

We understand that Jesus is God who has no beginning and end. He has been with the Father even before the creation of the world, and *"of one being with the Father is seated bodily after he became incarnate and his flesh was glorified."*

We reflected how Jesus died for us to save us from our sins during the 40 days of Lent. He appeared to his disciples several times after his resurrection, and now another 40 days after that event, they witnessed Jesus' going away, his ascending to heaven.

The disciple learned a lot from Jesus during his ministry on earth. They came to know gradually who Jesus is, as man and God even after his resurrection.

Yet, on the day of Jesus' ascension, while standing and looking up to the skies, they must be questioning each other.

*Why did Jesus go?
Where is he going?*

Pope Benedict XIV explains; *The Ascension is the sign of Jesus' new condition. He goes up to heaven to share the Father's throne, not only as the eternal Son of God, but also insofar as he is true man, the victor over sin and death. The glory that he had bodily received with the Resurrection is now completed with his public enthronement in heaven as Sovereign of creation, alongside the Father. Jesus also receives the homage and praise of the blessed in heaven.*

Jesus' ascension into heaven is the goal for each one of us.

He goes before us, and we are to follow Him there.

We are created for God and God wants us to be for him alone. In God alone is our true happiness.

Christ's ascension invites us to gaze toward heaven.

While we are concerned how to live on earth, shall we not prepare ourselves for our eternal home? How aware am I about this truth?

With the Ascension, the mission of Christ as Redeemer of the world in human flesh comes to an end. But Jesus continues to be with us even now. He is actively alive in the celebration of the sacraments especially in the Holy Eucharist. He is true to his promise:

I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.
(Matthew 28.20)

While Jesus has all the power of heaven and earth, he humbly entrusts to the disciples the mission:

Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation.

Jesus could have used his authority to make all obey and worship him. After all he deserves the homage of all creatures as Lord of heaven and earth. Yet, he does not claim power for himself.

The powerful God entrusts his kingdom to a small group of disciples who are not known and not well- educated.

For more than two thousand years, history tells us how the Church grows from a humble beginning with the power of the Holy Spirit. Yet, many still do not believe in God. One third of world's population are Christians. Much remains to be done to make God known and loved by many.

We do not wait to be perfectly knowledgeable and trained to share in the mission of the Church. We are all disciples for the mission. Hence, we are called missionary disciples.

PHASE THREE RESPOND – with/ in my personal faith /community faith story

Baptism has made me us members of the big family of God, the Church. As we celebrate the 500 years of Christianity of the Philippines, what gift can we individually share for the growth of the Church? How do I share in the mission that God has entrusted to us, as his missionary disciples?



CLOSING PRAYER

Leader: On this day when Jesus was lifted up from our midst, let us stand before his Father in prayer:

That God will give wisdom and insight to those who lead the Church into the new time in our history. Let us pray to the Lord

Response Lord hear our prayer

1. That we always share the wonderful things that God has done for us with those we meet. Let us pray to the Lord

2. For those who are suffering especially from Covid 19, that God may heal and empower them. Let us pray to the Lord

3. For all those who feel afraid of the future, that God will give them strength and comfort Let us pray to the Lord

Leader: God most holy, we ask you to hear our prayers as we wait for Jesus to return in glory. We come to you with our needs through Jesus Christ our Lord who has ascended to your right hand. Amen

BACKGROUND FOR THE CATECHISTS

CCC 659 "So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God." Christ's body was glorified at the moment of his Resurrection, as proved by the new and supernatural properties it subsequently and permanently enjoys. But during the forty days when he eats and drinks familiarly with his disciples and teaches them about the kingdom, his glory remains veiled under the appearance of ordinary humanity. Jesus' final apparition ends with the irreversible entry of his humanity into divine glory, symbolized by the cloud and by heaven, where he is seated from that time forward at God's right hand. Only in a wholly exceptional and unique way would Jesus show himself to Paul "as to one untimely born", in a last apparition that established him as an apostle.

CCC 661 This final stage stays closely linked to the first, that is, to his descent from heaven in the Incarnation. Only the one who "came from the Father" can return to the Father: Christ Jesus. "No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of man." Left to its own natural power humanity does not have access to the "Father's house", to God's life and happiness. Only Christ can open to man such access that we, his members, might have confidence that we too shall go where he, our Head and our Source, has preceded us.

