

Homily for Ascension

We are familiar with the frequently used saying 'to come full circle', which means that people or things, having set out on a journey or task, have returned to where they started. They have successfully completed the cycle and are back at the beginning. This applies particularly to our thoughts about Jesus on the Feast of the Ascension. The First Reading narrates about what Jesus had done and taught from the beginning of His ministry until the day when he was taken up to Heaven. In one sense, the Ascension celebrates that Jesus has come full circle because, having come from the Father to accomplish a specific mission, he returns to the Father having achieved what he was sent to do. But in another sense, the Ascension marks the passing on of the mission by Jesus to his apostles. They were mandated to continue his saving work, drawing all nations to the truth of the Gospel. He also promised to send the Holy Spirit who would guide them in their various activities.

Having locked her keys inside her car, the woman prayed to God for assistance. Just then a man walking by saw the situation and got her car door opened in nothing flat. Thank you God for sending me this nice man to help, she exclaimed. The man replied, I'm not nice. I just got out of jail for auto theft. "Thank you, God! the woman shouted to the sky, You even sent me a professional!

The message of the Ascension is clear. The saving work of Christ is now being handed over to the Church. So in the second reading, we find Paul reminding the Ephesians of the marvellous generosity and goodness of God who had made them one in Jesus and called them to be sharers of the glory of Christ which was the eternal glory of God. *I asked a woman once if Tom was in the house. She pointed at a chair and said, 'if he was here he would be there.'* He never moved far! Jesus – he is here and there. The risen lord has moved on, but he has not fully left us. His Spirit dwells in us. The one who came to earth has now gone back to heaven, bringing with him all that is human. His body – the man of heaven and the God of earth – is now the church, and that's us. Before we are of any denomination or group, we are Christ's. Today is the feast of the whole church – we begin in him and end in him, like the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, on the paschal candle. Our faith is also renewed through living with Jesus – we are partners in our mission. Our faith is also renewed in reading and praying the gospel each day. On earth we are his body, with all our strengths and weaknesses, goodness and sin. Icons have Jesus smiling as he reaches heaven, smiling on us and living through us. Where the qualities of the Spirit are alive, he is alive and well among us.

A Pastor, everybody knew was never paid much, so it was no surprise that when he died his family could not pay for the funeral. A parishioner went door-to-door collecting money and finally got to the home of a rabid atheist. Would you give £10 to bury a pastor? the parishioner asked. Sure! the atheist said. In fact, here's £20 – please bury two

The most important thing we can do for God is to let God reveal His glory through our lives. There is a short inspirational parable of 'The Pencil' . The pencil maker took the pencil aside, just before putting him into the box. There are 5 things you need to know, he told the pencil, before I send you out into the world. One: You will be able to do many great things, but only if you allow yourself to be held in someone's hand. Two: You will experience a painful sharpening from time to time, but you'll need it to become a better pencil. Three: You will be able to correct any mistakes you might make. Four: The most important part of you will always be what's inside. And Five: On every surface you are used on, you must leave your mark. No matter what the condition, you must continue to write. Now replacing the pencil with us, always remember: We will be able to do many great things, but only if we allow ourselves to be held in God's hand. And allow other human beings to access you for the many gifts you possess.