

The Ascension of the Lord

May 24, 2020

“That Jesus, the Resurrected, ‘ascended into heaven’ does not imply a geographical event, but rather a return to the starting point of his mission, now laden, however, with the whole harvest of the world that he reaped through that mission.” (Hans Urs von Balthasar, Credo, p.59)

“If I only knew then, what I know now. If I could turn back time. If I had to do it all over again.” How often have you either heard or said one, maybe all, of these statements? What would our lives be like now? Would they be the same as they are now? Would they be different? If they would be different, then what would our lives look like?

If you have ever dreamed of changing some aspect of your life from the past, then you would not be the first, nor would you be the last. People have always dreamed of going back in time. They would change the outcomes of certain decisions or either walk away from or toward certain situations. Until Tony Stark figures out time travel (Avengers Endgame), we must accept the fact that these serve only as distractions from the reality we are currently living. We are the result of all of the decisions we have made throughout our lives. Some have been good, while others have not. Yet, in the same way as the Resurrected Christ ascended to His Father bringing with Him the end result of His life’s work, so too, we must prepare ourselves to do the same.

The thought of this moment may seem morbid to some due to the current situation many in our world find themselves living through. We are encouraged toward healthy eating, taking vitamins, and exercising till our muscles become as hard as iron. With all of the modern advances in science and medicine, death still stands before us uttering the phrase; “I Am Inevitable.” Will we cower in his presence regretting that he arrived too soon or greet him as an old friend?

Our reflection of the Ascension of Jesus reminds us all that we must return to our own starting point as He did. For both Jesus and us, this point begins and ends in the presence of the Father. Like Jesus, we too will present to God the harvest of our life. What shall we present - a bountiful harvest of good virtuous deeds or a bushel basket of the weeds of regrets and missed opportunities?

We should not think it too late in the day for us to continue the work of our lives. Each new day we awaken to the possibility of our continued progression toward sainthood. For us to fulfill our potential, we must begin by thanking God who has lovingly provided us this second chance, this golden ticket to live one day more. We must examine the day just lived thanking Him for the good done in His Name. We may also find ourselves requesting His mercy for the times we failed to live as His Love requires. We should also seek to ask His assistance learning from our failures and resolving to avoid these same pitfalls. By prayerfully beginning each new day with these three basic spiritual desires in our minds and hearts, then we will not dread the day when death comes to visit us. Instead, like the saints of old, we shall joyfully enter into His Presence with hearts full of love and spirits strengthened from this life’s journey.