

The Ascension of the Lord (New Mass)
Sunday After the Ascension (Latin Mass)
May 21, 2023
Year of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Ark of the New Covenant

“Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, Which,” He said, you heard of from Me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” (Acts 1:4-5)

Many individuals love playing games or reading books that present to them an intellectual challenge. Some of the favorites are crossword puzzles and riddles or mystery thrillers to be solved. Today, I would like to offer a challenge for us to explore. We will examine three verses of the first chapter in the Biblical book Acts of the Apostles, pose a question in conjunction with both our study of the Blessed Virgin Mary along with our preparation for Pentecost, and deduce its importance using only two resources – the authorized King James version of the Bible, copyright Word Aflame Press, 1973, and our own skilled reasoning. Now that we have laid out our parameters, let us begin.

We begin with the three verses taken from the King James Bible: *“Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey. And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and **Mary the mother of Jesus**, and with his brethren.”* (Acts 1:12-14). And now, the question we will attempt to answer: What was Mary, the Mother of Jesus doing in the upper room, along with the others, who were preparing for the outpouring of the promised Holy Spirit?

To assist us in finding an answer, we must first begin with what we already know. Using Acts of the Apostles, we can read where Jesus commanded His followers not to depart Jerusalem until they had received the promised Holy Spirit gift from the Father. *“And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but **wait for the promise of the Father**, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.”* (Acts 1:4-5). *“But ye shall receive power, **after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you**: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”* (Acts 1:8). Furthermore, Saint Luke even provides us the number of people present in the upper room. *“And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about a hundred and twenty,)”* (Acts 1:15).

Using our reason, we may now conclude that of the 120 individuals present in the upper room, 119 were prayerfully awaiting the coming of the Holy Spirit upon them. The reason we will present for this our conclusion is thus – the Blessed Virgin Mary had already received the Holy Spirit. Returning to Sacred Scripture we read the following: *“And the angel answered and said unto her, **The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee**, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the*

Son of God.” (Luke 1:35). Again, using our reason, we would say that Mary was filled with the Holy Spirit who came upon her and overshadowed her when the Angel Gabriel announced to her that she would bear within her womb the Son of God. We can conclude those things we know by stating that Mary, unlike the other apostles and disciples, had already experienced the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at the Annunciation. Therefore, her presence in the upper room was significantly different from the rest for she was not there to prepare for the Holy Spirit who she already opened herself up to receive.

Returning to our original question, if she was not preparing to receive the Holy Spirit, then why was she present in the upper room? I offer these two verses from Saint John’s Gospel to guide us to our answer. “*When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, **Woman, behold thy son!** Then saith he to the disciple, **Behold thy mother!** And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.*” (John 19:26-27). I propose that our answer is this – Mary is faithfully fulfilling the request of her Son as He died upon the cross, she has taken His sons and daughters as her children. Mary is there to intercede to her Son on behalf of her adopted children. She is there to pray for them to receive the Holy Spirit. Her presence affirms the fruitfulness of her “Spiritual Motherhood” of all baptized Christians who call God their Father and Jesus their brother. The only question left to ponder is this: If the Blessed Mother Mary, as her Son’s most perfect disciple, does what her Son asks (adopting us as her children), then, are we fulfilling His request to us? Are we taking her, our Spiritual Mother, into our homes, our hearts, our prayers? And this, my dear family, is the one question which only you can answer for yourself!