



How the Ascension of Jesus can inform our daily life

Article by Peter Kosloski found on aleteia.org

After we “rise” with Christ, we should then “ascend” with him by changing our mindset.

In Christian spirituality, the Resurrection of Jesus is often linked to our ability to die to our sins and rise with Jesus in a new life of virtue. The sacrament of baptism is the most obvious example of how this symbolism is lived out, as the individual is immersed in water, dying to their sins, then rises from the font with a clean soul. However, there is one more step that occurs after our resurrection in the spiritual life. We then need to “ascend” with Jesus in our daily choices.

Fr. William Graham, in the Pulpit Commentary on Catholic Teaching, explains how Jesus’ ascension correlates to our spiritual life.

[Jesus] “was lifted up” in His ascension and our hearts follow and are drawn to Him in the throne He occupies, at the right hand of His Father, in the heaven. He opened for us, and wherein He “is always living to make intercession for us.”

As the fruits of our thoughts on the twin mystery of the Resurrection and the Ascension we may glean a twofold lesson suggested in the words of St. Paul: “If ye be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above” (Coll. iii, 1). We, too, must rise from the dead and ascend, or perish.

Graham goes on to describe how after rising from our sinful way of life, we need to then “seek the things that are above,” imitating Jesus’ ascension.

Let us take a lesson from the Ascension, and ever “seek the things that are above.” “Mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth” (Coll. iii, 2). “Christ rising again from the dead dieth now no more; death shall have no more dominion over him” (Rom. vi., 9). The Ascension, as I said, is the completion of the Resurrection, so, too, the soul that rises from sin, that emerges from the unregenerate natural state to the supernatural, ascends, rises to a new sphere, a new plane of being. It is more than a mere elevation of thought, or feeling, it is a passing from death to life, and abiding therein. Grace, the principle of this inner change of life, is the seed of glory. A soul in grace, is really a soul that has “ascended with Christ”; hence the word “heavenly-minded,” so aptly applied to souls thus risen, and ascended with Christ.

He adds one more note on how this can impact our daily life.

[W]hile we make the great doctrines of the Resurrection and Ascension “a light to the mind,” let us not fail also to make them “a guide to the heart.” Let moral death, i. e., sin, never “have dominion over us,” let us ever in the way of life be “risen with Christ,” and in the realms of thought, of conversation, and of conduct, “seek the things that are above.”

Essentially what Graham is arguing is that Jesus’ ascension should point our entire being towards Heaven, and guide our every thought and deed. We should have Heaven as our goal and seek it, using whatever means is most fruitful.

Above all, it is a shift in mindset, no longer focusing on our own selfish desires, but looking towards Heaven and conducting ourselves as citizens of that blessed place. Once we do that, we will experience a profound change in our lives that will effect everything we say or do.

