

The Ascension of the Lord

June 1, 2025

Year of the Holy Spirit

“The pastor will hence learn that this mystery should be explained with the greatest diligence; and that he should take care that the people not only perceive it with faith and understanding, but that they also strive as far as possible, with the Lord’s help to reflect it in their lives and actions.”

(Catechism of the Council of Trent, Part One The Creed, Article VI)

Each year we gather together to remember and celebrate the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ into Heaven after accomplishing His work of redemption. This marks the completion and perfection of all of the mysteries of the Christian religion which began at His Incarnation in the Womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Furthermore, we believe through His Ascension, human flesh is caught up into the inner life of the Trinity in Heaven. Jesus, now possessing a glorified Body, does not, nor will not stop being man. In essence, in Heaven, Jesus is God and Lord of all. While at the same time, He is the Son of Mary and humbly shows the same perfect obedience to both her and Joseph, His foster father, as He showed upon earth. A point of our Christian faith I find truly amazing.

In the spirit of the Catechism of the Council of Trent, I would like to reflect upon three points of Jesus’ Ascension. We will reflect upon (1) the reasons for the Ascension, (2) the results of the Ascension and (3) the benefits from the Ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ. As the Catechism so rightly instructs the pastor, this is a great event which both affirms the profound humility of the Word of God who freely chooses to descend into our weakened human condition, redeem it and glorify it.

We must begin by inquiring into the reasons for the Ascension of Jesus into Heaven. The first reason, some may consider obvious, concerns Heaven as His rightful place. Jesus ascends to the right hand because no created place can contain Him. The most suitable abode for God is in God. It is the proper dwelling for the Word to be with the One who first spoke that Word. Likewise, He ascended to His Throne which stands at the right of His Father. In ancient times, the person who sat to the right of the King was considered a second to the King in both word and deed. Jesus ascends to this position to possess all and to rightly judge all. It was His total/perfect offering of Himself in loving obedience to His Father in His Passion, Death and Resurrection which bestowed this upon Him. His presence in Heaven reminds us, His children, that our ultimate destination is not found upon this earth, but with Him who abides and reigns from above.

We now seek to understand and explain the results of His Ascension. We stated in the previous paragraph that Jesus sits at the right hand of the Father. This is extremely vital for us. He is able to present Himself, particularly His Wounded Body, to the Father as an act of human obedience. It is through this perfect offering of Himself upon the cross as both God and man, Jesus is able to assume the mantle of High Priest. And what did the high priest of the Old

Testament do for the people? He offered a sacrifice. Jesus, now sitting at the right hand of the Father, offers His Sacrifice for us. Although we give the title of Advocate to the Holy Spirit, Jesus is our first Advocate who intercedes for us. And not only that, but He also goes to prepare a place for those, His children, judged to be worthy of eternal residence within His Father's house. The mansions of Heaven await to be occupied by those willing to imitate Him, giving both freely and lovingly of themselves.

Finally, let us reflect upon the benefits available for us due to His Ascension. Our faith is greatly encouraged due to His Ascension because we must now show that faith. As He recounted to Thomas: "Blessed are those who have not seen but have believed." (John 20:29). Furthermore, by His bringing our human nature into the inner life of the Trinity, we now have a certain hope that we can abide there as well. It is because we have this hope, we obediently choose to live as He desires not for gain and profit, but for love. The benefits of this eternal blessedness with Him dwarfs all earthly pleasure for nothing compares. The reward of all which lies ahead with and in Him, should instill within us a desire to never turn and glance at what we have left behind.