

Ascension Day

Set aside a prayer time and begin by relaxing and coming to stillness.

Read the Gospel, preferably aloud and slowly, paying attention to any words that stand out for you. Stay with those words for a few minutes and wait to see if God is present to you.

Matthew 28:16-20 *Go and make disciples of all nations.*

The eleven disciples set out for Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had arranged to meet them. When they saw him, they fell down before him, though some hesitated.

Jesus came up and spoke to them. He said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, make disciples of all the nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you.

And know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.'

Reflection

Jesus has arranged to meet the remaining eleven disciples in Galilee, on a mountain. Jesus appears and some fall to the ground in a gesture of worship, but not all of them do. Some have doubts.

Jesus ignores this doubt and gives all of them what turns out to be his last instructions.

Did they realise what was going to happen next?

Could they take in all that was said?

Did they realise the importance of these four commands?

Go. Make, Baptise, Teach, four commands that they were to put into action reaching all the peoples of the world. An impossible task? Jesus knows this and ends by the *Know* promise “*Know* that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.”

Do the four commands have any relevance for you, today, where you live?

Go out and reach people globally.

Make everyone a disciple of Me, imitating Me?

Baptise people, help them belong, know they are part of my Family, my sons and daughters, everyone.

Teach them everything I taught and showed you.

Does the final promise reflect your life experience?

How do you feel hearing God say to you He is an ever present reality in your life, with you until the end of time. Have you ever felt abandoned by God? Do you have doubts about who God is, where He is? Feeling inadequate in the face of this mission statement? Does it relate to you?

“Do not be afraid” because, unlike the disciples, there and then, you know that you possess the Holy Spirit, right here, right now. They will wait, afraid until Pentecost, hiding away.

Are you afraid of your inadequacies, your unworthiness, of how other people will perceive you?

Do you dwell on these, or can you trust God to use you to carry out your mission to invite others, by word and example, to join the feast that is the kingdom of God? Enable others to live life to the full?

With the help of His Grace, not through our own efforts, we can cooperate with God, aligning our will to His, imitate Jesus and rely on the Holy Spirit to inspire us.

With God’s Grace we can meet and live through every challenge life throws at us. See the prayer by St Francis de Sales, found in Fr David Murphy’s prayerbook:

Do not look forward to what might happen tomorrow;
the same Everlasting Father who cares for you today,
will take care of you tomorrow, and every day.

Either he will shield you from suffering,
or he will give you unfailing strength to bear it.

Be at peace, then,
and put aside all anxious thoughts and imaginings.