

THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD, ABC

“THE ASCENSION: OUR PORTAL TO ETERNITY”

Today, as we celebrate the Ascension of the Lord, we reiterate what we profess in our Creed: that Our Lord Jesus Christ ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father.

The Solemnity of the Ascension should be a cause of great joy for us. To realize the significance of the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ into heaven, we must understand something of the nature of the Church, which is the *Mystical Body of Christ*. Christ is the head of the Mystical Body; we are its members through the waters of baptism. The head and the body are inseparable, as St Augustine points out:

“Where the Head is, there is the Body, where I am, there is my Church, we too are one; the Church is in me and I in her and we two are your Beloved and your Lover.”ⁱ

Why should the event of the Ascension be so significant to us? It means that our human nature has been taken into heaven! Think of the reality of the Incarnation. Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity, took on our human nature and lived among us in the flesh. In returning to His Father, Christ has not abandoned us. Rather, He has taken our human nature with him into heaven. The Ascension is our portal into eternity!

St Augustine offers us the following instruction:

“Today our Lord Jesus Christ ascended into heaven; let our hearts ascend with him. Listen to the words of the Apostle: ‘If you have risen with Christ, set your hearts on the things that are above where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God; seek the things that are above, not the things that are on earth.’ For just as he remained with us even after his ascension, so we too are already in heaven with him, even though what is promised us has not yet been fulfilled in our bodies.”ⁱⁱ

The Ascension of our Lord is ‘a feast of hope, a foretaste of heaven. By going before us, Jesus our Head has given us the right to follow Him there some day.’ⁱⁱⁱ The Catechism puts it in these words:

‘Left to its own natural powers humanity does not have access to the “Father’s house,” to God’s life and happiness. Only Christ can open to man such access that we, his members, might have confidence that we shall go where he, our Head and our Source, has preceded us.’^{iv}

The Ascension of the Lord is a reminder to us that we are merely sojourners here on earth; our citizenship is in heaven. May we always manifest this by the way we live here and now!

ⁱ Taken from <http://www.catholic.org/news/hf/faith/story.php?id=60433>

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ Fr. Gabriel of St Mary Magdalen, *DIVINE INTIMACY*, 1996, TAN Books and Publishers, Inc., Rockford, IL, p. 535

^{iv} *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 661.