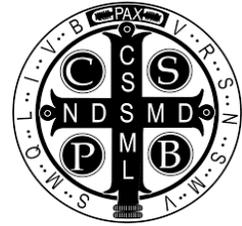


The MEDITATION



“ Thus says the Lord: Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is: and walk in it, and find rest for your souls.” - Jeremiah; Chapter 6, Verse 16.

May 14th , A.D. 2015
Ascension Day



“Ascension” - 1775
By John Singleton Copley (1738 – 1815)
American painter

2.

“**Y**e men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up to heaven? In like manner ye have seen him going up into heaven, so shall he come again” These are the opening verses of the Mass for today, Ascension Day.

“*God is gone up with a merry noise, and the Lord with the sound of the trump*” was sung at the office of **Vigils** and **Lauds** earlier this morning. We grieve when those we love leave us, however convinced we are that a better life awaits them, when our eldest Brother goes up into Heaven, we rejoice for Him and for ourselves. Today is not only a day of glory for Jesus, it is also a day of victory for us. The Ascension, for Christ, completes His resurrection, as it will for us. We too, shall share in the glory of His Ascension if after suffering and dying with Him, we rise again with Him.

Forty days have passed since Easter Sunday, and Jesus can say to His Father: “*I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.*” (*St. John; Ch. 17, Vs. 4*). He has partaken of the chalice of His bitter Passion fully. God’s justice is satisfied, and Heaven opens once again. He has formed His Apostles and founded His Church, so that His work may be continued. “*He shewed himself alive after his passion, by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.*” (*Acts; Ch. 1, Vs. 4*).

Christ now clothes His Apostles with the divine authority and puts all means of grace at their disposal. He gave them this charge: “*Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned*” (*St. Mark; Ch. 16, Vss. 15-16*).

Jesus insisting on the spiritual nature of His Kingdom for the last time, promises to His Apostles the light, the power, and the consolations of His Holy Ghost; “*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 of Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth.*” (*Acts; Ch. 1, Vs. 8*).

Then, “*he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and was carried up into heaven.*” (*St. Luke; Ch. 24, Vs. 50-52*), rising slowly in the radiance of His Godhead, against the background of a brilliant sky. Speechless, the Apostles “*worshipped him.*” (*Luke; Ch. 24, Vs. 52*).

“*And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel ; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in likewise manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.*” (*Acts; Ch. 1, Vs. 10-11*).

The Apostles, full of having experienced this great event, “*returned to Jerusalem with great joy : And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God.*” (*St. Luke; Ch. 24, Vs. 52-53*).

The triumph of the Cross has begun and shall continue until all mankind: “*Acclaim the King of Kings and sing a hymn to Almighty God, Alleluia.*” (*Antiphon of the Office of **Lauds***).

Suffering, abandonment, and anguish were His, under the Mount of Olives. He lay there, like a worm and trampled underfoot. He was betrayed by a false friend and was already the prey of cruel torments then taken prisoner by His own people, that He might be condemned and die the cruellest of deaths upon a cross.

3.

He assembles, on the mountain top, the disciples who had been witnesses to His great humiliation, to hear His last words and receive His blessing. Here, where His Passion began, He gave the apostles who had forsaken Him and fled, the order to continue His mission not just to Jerusalem, Judea, and the Jews . . . but to the whole world.

They witnessed His glorious entry into the Kingdom of His Father before they were dragged before kings, emperors, and judges for His sake – entry which would one day be theirs, when they had suffered, striven, and overcome!

The Father, who had not let the chalice pass by His only-begotten Son, crowns Him today as King of Heaven and earth; “*for the suffering of death... that he, by the grace of God should taste death for every man*” (*Heb.; Ch. 2, Vs. 9*). What an example for all of us, with our fear for suffering, and our inclination to take that path of least resistance!

O glorified Jesus, We rejoice with Thee, because of the honour and glory which is thine, on the right hand of the Father. We wish Thee joy of Thy eternal royalty and Thy dominion over all creation. We promise to Thee our fidelity until death. Deign to be our Mediator, our “*advocate with the Father*” (*I John; Ch. 2, Vs.1*). Now, and forever. Amen.



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