



From the Pastor's Desk:

I am so happy that I told you all about limiting the Air-Conditioning last week and then having it followed by a "cold front" of weather. Thank you God, for the cool weather! We are moving forward with our finances, trying to balance the paying of weekly bills through the Sunday and Easter Collections, and separately, using the Campaign monies to get the projects done. We need a complete new roof on the Church to stop and fend off the leaks that, if not stopped (again, as you all know from your homes) will lead to more deterioration and destruction. I hope you think of our facilities as a "larger" version of your house. We are in the contract

deliberation stage together with the Diocesan Building Commission (because of the size and cost of the project) and plan to have a start date for this summer.

I am also meeting with the Finance Committee to go over all these issues, review the budget and spending, discuss our "Automated Giving Program" and ways to increase the weekly collection through the cooperation of the present poor givers of the parish.

The final installment of the "Reflection on Hope and New Life after the Easter Feasts" below has a great ending that plays off the feast of the Ascension. Like the Apostles we need to stop looking up in the air to see where Jesus went and respond to his "Great Commission" to "Go forth and teach all nations...." For us at OLPH that "nation" is Lindenhurst and the Diocese. To meet the great commission is to follow and live out parish Mission Statement found on the inside of front page of this bulletin. Have you read it lately? I recommend that you read it before you read this reflection, and then, read it again after you finish.

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"Reflection on Hope and New Life after the Easter Feasts" (...continued from last week... PART 5, the finale...)

By Thomas Rosica, CSB (Consulter to the Pontifical Council for Social Communications)

The Great Commission

Moments of leave-taking and farewell, especially among friends and loved ones, are never easy. Picture the emotionally charged departure scene in the conclusion of Matthew's Gospel [28:16-20]. The majestic liturgical scene relates to us Jesus' final earthly moments and the great commission to the Church: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember I am with you always, to the end of the age [19-20]".

Consider for a moment the reality of those men and women who are commissioned on the mountain in Galilee. Each of them would demonstrate such human weakness. One would show treachery. Fear and trembling would make them all deserters. One would deny Jesus and bitterly regret it. Only when the one we call "Rock" realized the full significance of his denial would the ministry of church leadership and unity be placed on his shoulders. Two of them, James and John, displayed such naked ambition that they would qualify instantly for the corporate world of today!

Some would ask questions that clearly revealed their profound ignorance of the master's message and life. Such pathetic brokenness... and yet Matthew's Gospel tells us: "The eleven disciples" made their way to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. No longer was the Twelve, that magic number that gave them continuity with the long history of Judaism, but the eleven, which indicated that one missing, one had failed. Yet in spite of the humanity and the failure, the eleven are entrusted with the dream of the Risen Lord.

Just as the Risen Lord entrusted himself into the hands of such pathetic, broken people, he does the same to us. The full significance of the Ascension reminds us that Christ accepts our lack of self-confidence in ourselves. He accepts the shadowy and dark areas of our humanity. He accepts our capacity for deceit, betrayal, greed and power. And having accepted us, he calls us, gives us the eternal commission to be his people, and sends us to serve him and love him, in spite of ourselves and because of ourselves.

Luke refers to the Ascension in his Acts of the Apostles (1:10-11). The angels' words to the "men of Galilee" in the Acts reading are piercing and loaded: "Why do you stand here looking up at the skies? This Jesus who has been taken from you will return, just as you saw him go up to the heavens". Jesus disappears from bodily view. Only in his physical separation from the historical scene can his spiritual union with the entire world for all time be complete.

The disciples are given a last bit of instruction. "Don't keep trying to stare into the future. Don't be overly concerned about which hour he will come back". We must not stand idly staring up into the heavens and moaning about the past, about which we can do nothing, except to bury it deeply in God's hands and heart! The Lord will be glorified, and it follows that his disciples will also share in his glory. Let's get going and carry a piece of heaven into the world. This is the meaning of the Resurrection and the Ascension of our Lord, not one of divine abandonment of the human cause, but divine empowerment of the Gospel dream!

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Now read our parish Mission Statement on the inside of the front page of this bulletin. How are we putting this commission into action?

May God +bless you and yours now and forever.

Father Anthony