

13th May 2018 (Ascension Sunday, Year B)

Acts 1:1-11; Psalm 46(47):2-3,6-9; Ephesians 1:17-23; Mark 16:15-20.

Go out to the whole world; proclaim the Good News to all creation.

In the book of the Acts of the Apostles, Luke informs us that after a period during which the first disciples continued to experience the physical presence of the risen Jesus in their midst, Jesus returned to the Father. Today, forty days after Easter, we celebrate this moment in the life of the Church.

The story of Jesus does not end here; rather this introduces us to a new chapter of Jesus' presence in our world. The great mystery on which our whole faith is based is our belief that the Word of God, the second person in the Trinity, took up flesh and dwelt among us; in John's words, he pitched his tent among us (1:14). When Jesus ascended back to the Father he did not stop his presence with us, but changed the way he is present.

In today's gospel reading according to Mark, we read of the great commission to go out to the whole world and proclaim the good news to all creation. The Word of God is no longer present among us as a human person, but lives in our midst through our witness and proclamation of this Word. Inside Mary's womb the Word took flesh; through our witnessing and proclamation the Word takes on new life.

We are called to be the Word of God; to witness this word and carry it with us everywhere we go. One of the jobs we are required to do is to 'translate' God's Word, not from Greek and Hebrew into our spoken languages, but into the different spaces and cultures we participate in. The world hungers and thirsts for God's Word; it is our job to bring the Word to the world.

In the gospel according to Mark, Jesus tells his disciples and ourselves to proclaim the good news to all of creation; not just to all peoples, but all of creation! It is important that the people around us listen to God's Word through our words and actions; we are not always called to be preachers of the Word, but we are all definitely called to witness the Word. When God became flesh he took onto himself and consecrated everything that is human; our culture, our work, our responsibilities, our relationship with creation. We are now commissioned to be God in this world, especially in a world that struggles to see God.

A constant examination of conscience that we need to make is: how do I let the Word of God convert me so that I can become God's Word to the world? God's Word is a loving, merciful and forgiving Word; how do I bring this love, mercy and forgiveness to all those with whom I come in contact? Do I represent to my sisters and brothers a judging God, or a merciful and understanding God? God's Word is a creating Word! How do my actions help create a new world around me? Are my actions respectful of the environment I have been invited to live in? Do I live in a way that respects the resources around me? Do I help create by respecting and protecting the world I live in?

Next Sunday we celebrate the coming of the Spirit, God within us. It is this Spirit that was present in creation, was present at Jesus' conception, and is present in my life. The Spirit of God leads and enlightens me along the way

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