



Cathedral Basilica of Our Lady of Peace

Cathedral of the Honolulu Diocese • Founded 1843 • National Historic Register

The Ascension of the Lord

May 21, 2023

Beloved Disciples of Christ,

Greetings of peace, love, and joy!

“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.” (Mt. 28: 19-20)

We are about to close the Easter Season. With our liturgical celebration this Sunday of the Ascension of our Lord and next Sunday, the Solemnity of Pentecost, Easter Season ends. What would these be if you had one or two takeaways for this year’s Season of Grace? A renewed hope? A life-giving direction? A life filled with peace, love, and joy? Whatever these may be, let us all be grateful because all of these are given to us unconditionally by the love and sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross.

The Feast of the Ascension of the Lord makes us aware of Jesus’ continued presence with us through the power of the Holy Spirit. It also stirs in us our participation in the life-giving sacrifice of Jesus by becoming His witnesses to the world and sharing His Good News.

Understanding the Feast of the Ascension needs much care and caution. To interpret this literally may lead us to a different conclusion and misunderstanding of this event in the life of our Lord. If we think of heaven as a geographical place, we may be asking where heaven is. Is it in the sky? Is it beyond the Milky Way? Where? If it is somewhere out there and we cannot find it, is Jesus no longer present with us?

The mystery of the Ascension is more than that. It is in the presence of God, that is, being with the Father. The Ascension event draws us to understand Jesus’ words in the Gospel of John, *“I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”* It makes us understand that our life is moving toward the Father and our way to Him is through Jesus. And all these have to take place to complete the journey toward our salvation through Him.

In the Ascension account, what is also noticeable is Jesus’ commands to make disciples of all nations. He entrusted His mission to them so that His message of salvation would be heard for all generations. Though afraid that things might happen to them what their Master experienced, they took it by heart and went out boldly to continue Jesus’ mission. They were promised He would be with them through the Advocate, Holy Spirit, to guide and lead them to fulfill their tasks.

The Feast of the Ascension invites us to realize our life goal: to be with God. It also makes us aware that God is always with us. It reminds us also to look deeper into ourselves if we are living rightly and justly as sons and daughters of God. It invites us also to continue the mission He has entrusted to us. Our mission is to make known to more and more people that Jesus is the Son of God and the world’s Savior. Eventually, we glory in the Lord when He comes to rule and judge the world.

Our Easter Season is ending. Let’s always celebrate God’s abundant blessings with great joy as much as possible. He gave us His Son, our Redeemer, to bring light and life to our world. He is the source of our peace, love, and joy. We have everything we need through Him, With Him, and In Him. Let us trust in His goodness, for He is with us always!

Your friend in Jesus,

Fr. Pascual