

FEAST: Ascension

Ascension: A Key That Unlocks the Meaning of Life

By Deacon Keith Fournier

Does the Ascension affect our lives in the here and now? Is it a commemoration of an event which occurred 2000 years ago? Or, could it be the key that helps unlock the very meaning of our lives and the plan of God for the entire created order?

The great western Bishop Augustine proclaimed these words on the Feast: "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."

When we went down into the Font of Baptism we were incorporated into Jesus Christ, made members of His Body, the Church. Therefore, as Augustine also wrote, "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." In other words, we have ascended with the Lord! He is the Head and we are members of His Body. We cannot be separated. Augustine, reflecting the clear teaching of the early Church Fathers reminds us that the Head and the Body are the "One Christ." So, this is our Feast as well!

Pope St Leo the Great reflected on the joy the disciples experienced on that glorious day in these words: "That blessed company had a great and inexpressible cause for joy when it saw man's nature rising above the dignity of the whole heavenly creation, above the ranks of angels, above the exalted status of archangels. There would be no limit to its upward course until humanity was admitted to a seat at the right hand of the Father."

Both of these Saints remind us why we should rejoice on this Feast of the Ascension. The Ascension does not mark the end of Jesus' relationship with the Church but the beginning of a new way of His relating to the world, in and through the Church. This way includes every one of us who bear His name. You see, we have also ascended with the Lord. When viewed with the eyes of Resurrection faith the Ascension is capable of transforming the way we view ourselves and live our daily lives. We are joined to Him and He to us!

Jesus Christ bridged heaven and earth. Through His Incarnation, His Saving Life, Death and Resurrection, we have been set free from the consequences of sin, including the sting of death. (See, 1 Cor. 15:55) We are being created anew in Him daily as we freely cooperate with His grace. One of the Catechism's definitions of grace is "a participation in Divine Life". (See, CCC #1997) It calls to mind the wonderful words of the Apostle Peter in his second letter. He reminded the early Christians that they were "participants in the Divine Nature". (2 Peter 1:4) So are we!

This Divine Life is mediated to us through the Word and the Sacraments - in the Church. We are incorporated into the Trinitarian communion of love, beginning now. The Church is not some "thing", the Church is Some-One, the Risen Christ truly present in the world which was created through Him and is being re-created in Him. The Church is the new Israel sent into the world to continue His redemptive mission until He comes again. Then He will complete the work of Redemption. The Church, as the fathers were fond of saying, is the new world in the course of transfiguration. The Christian vocation is about learning to live this new relationship in Christ together, with the Father, through the Holy Spirit and for the sake of a world that still awaits its full redemption.

The Ascension of the Lord is not a final act in the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ. Nor is it some kind of "intermission" to be concluded upon Christ's Bodily return - which will most certainly occur. Rather, it is about a new way of *being*, living in Christ in the here and now. The Apostle Paul wrote to the early Christians in Galatia: "No longer do I live but Christ lives in me and the life I now live I live by faith in the Son of God." (Galatians 2:19, 20) That is how we are invited to live, now.

Jesus said "Abide in me as I in you" (John 15:4). These are not mere sentiments of piety but meant to become reality, now. Christians can live differently now because we live "in" Jesus Christ. We can love differently now because we love "in" Jesus Christ. On this Feast of the Ascension we should ask ourselves this question, "How are we doing?" The Feast presents us with an invitation to assess the relationship between our profession of faith and its manifestation in our daily lives. St. Paul encouraged the Christians in Corinth in his second letter to take such an examination: "Examine yourselves to see whether you are living in faith. Test yourselves. Do you not realize that Jesus Christ is in you? Unless, of course, you fail the test. I hope you will discover that we have not failed."

Philosophers and theologians speak of "ontology" as the essence of being, that which makes something what it is. There is an "ontological" meaning to this Feast of the Ascension. We have ascended with Him and are called to live on earth the very realities of heaven, beginning now. This Feast also gives us insight into the Feast of Pentecost which we will soon celebrate. The "breath" of God, His Spirit, has been breathed into this Church and thus into each one of us in order to enable us to live this way and engage in His ongoing work of redemption.

That work will not be complete until the One who ascended returns and hands the re-created cosmos back to the Father. That is "the plan", the "mystery" now revealed in Jesus Christ. This is the key that will help us unlock the very meaning of our lives and the plan of God for the entire created order.

To conclude, "In him you also, who have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and have believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, which is the first installment of our inheritance toward redemption as God's possession, to the praise of his glory." (Ephesians 1:3-14)

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MASSES & SERVICES

Saturday: 5pm
(Anticipated Mass)
Sunday: 9am, 11am & 5pm
Monday – Wednesday 8am
Thursday Mass/Novena:
8am & 7pm
Friday, Saturday, Holidays: 9am
(Fridays in July & August: 8am)
Reconciliation
Saturday: 4-4:45pm
Adoration
Saturday 9:30-10am
Library Hours
Sunday: 10-10:45am, 4:30-5pm

OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Friday: 9am-4pm

STAFF

Pastor
Babu Mathew, C.Ss.R.
Associate Pastor
Joseph Horo, C.Ss.R.
Office Manager
Virginia Fong
Pastoral Coordinator
Bertilla Watanabe
Bookkeeper
Corinna Siy
Youth Ministry Coordinator
Theresa Barao

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olphchurchvancouver



OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP PARISH

May 28, 2017

7th Sunday of Easter

Celebrating Mothers and their Families

Dear Friends & Parishioners,

The Mother's Day Youth Ministry Fundraiser was a very successful effort by Our Lady's Youth Ministry and all who worked hard to support them. I was moved by the generous parishioners who took part in the silent auction and donations -- families who looked beyond cellophane hampers and saw the importance of promoting and supporting the youth of our parish.

It looked like all the mothers present had a great time. The children came forward that evening and helped their hands up to pray for their moms. It was a touching moment for the mothers looking on. That weekend all mothers also received a special blessing at all the Masses.

It is certainly a wonderful thing to acknowledge and show appreciation for their long hours, dedication and love. Fathers must lead the way in giving their wives the respect and gratitude for what they do so that the children don't take mom's hard work for granted.

My own mother played a very important role in my choice of a vocation. At home, we always prayed the Rosary and after the Rosary my mother always said the Prayer for Vocations to Religious Life resulting in two of us going into the priesthood. A mother's prayer never goes unheard!

The role of mothers in guiding our children is led naturally by Our Blessed Mother. She is our model of a mother who stood by Jesus in support of his teaching ministry and finally through the suffering and death on the cross. Allow her to be your inspiration and you will see blessings and graces showered upon the entire family.

Yours in Christ,
Fr. Babu Mathew, C.Ss.R



God has gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet! - Psalm 47

NEWS & NOTICES

OLPH Jr K Summer Camp: The Junior Kindergarten Program of OLPH Parish is excited to be offering a 2017 Summer Camp. This is a half-day program for children from 3-6 years old. Come join us for some Summer fun with fieldtrips to our local parks, the beach, clay-making, yoga and so much more. Camp Dates: Week 1 July 3-7 | Week 2 July 10-14 | Week 3 July 17-21.

OLPH "Project Timothy" & Discovery Faith Study Reunion: Are you a participant in "Project Timothy" faith studies here or at any parish? Have you ever taken part in a Discovery Faith Study - here, at another parish, or on a university campus? ALL participants who have ever taken a "Discovery Faith Study" are invited to join us for lunch on Sunday, May 28 after the 11 am Mass - for a fun celebration and a look ahead to what is coming up for our parish and the Archdiocese with Project Timothy this year. RSVP to shankelly@me.com.

Food Bank: On the weekend of May 27 & 28. The focus is on baby food.

PREP Pre-Registration: The Parish Religious Education Program (PREP) is for elementary school aged children who are not attending Catholic school. Pre-registration for the 2017/2018 school year is now being accepted. Please contact Elizabeth Towers at 604-440-8809 or email prep@olphbc.ca for information. Pre-registrations continue till the end of June.

PREP Teachers & Teaching Assistants Needed: Would you like to share your talents by helping out as a teacher or teaching assistant? PREP is for children Grades 1-7 who do not go to Catholic school but need to be educated in the Faith. For more information, please contact Elizabeth Towers at 604-440-8809 or email prep@olphbc.ca.

Journey Canada: Made In God's Image: A free seminar intended for Christian audiences to facilitate education and awareness on topics related to sexuality and relationships in our shifting culture. Wednesday, June 7, at 7 p.m. at Culloden Church, Vancouver. For more info, contact bc@journeycanada.org. Journey Canada is a non-denominational, community-based, Christ-centred discipleship ministry. The Archdiocese of Vancouver supports the work of Journey Canada: Made in God's Image.

Holy Land Pilgrimage: Nov. 26 to Dec. 9, 2017. See you at for information and to meet and greet our chaplain for the pilgrimage, Fr. David Franco, FSSP, Assistant Pastor at Holy Family Parish, 4851 Beatrice Street, Vancouver. Meeting will be held after the 9:00 a.m. Mass on Saturday, June 10. Contact Susan Kotnik, Orbis Catholicus Travel at 604-465-6911 or e-mail susankotnik@gmail.com for further information".

Reclaim your dream and get married in the Church: Would you like to get your marriage blessed so you can receive the sacraments? We can help you. On September 16, 2017, Archbishop Miller, CSB, will celebrate the blessing of marriages at St. Clare's Parish, Coquitlam for a large number of civilly married couples. Be a part of it. To learn more, check out our upcoming information session on May 31 at 6:30pm at Our Lady of Good Counsel, Surrey. For more info, please contact Deacon Greg at 604-771-2975 or Jimmy at 778-378-5389.

APRIL COLLECTIONS: THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

	APRIL
Sunday Offering	\$45,060.40
Collection for the Needy	\$1,898.00
Parish Mission	\$3,085.00
Share Lent	\$5,887.00
Good Friday/Holy Land	\$3,605.40
Food Bank	\$639.30

Stewardship Reflection

"I am praying for them..." -- JOHN 17: 9

Prayer is the foundation of our Faith and the foundation of Stewardship. Pray in good times and in bad. Prayer is always the first best option in any situation, not just the last resort. Pray for friends and family and for those that don't treat you very well. Pray to give praise, to thank and to ask God for help. Pray to see what God wants you to do with the gifts He has given you.

Stewardship Office, Archdiocese of St. Louis

CALENDAR

JUNE

Pentecost Celebration

Sunday June 4: After 11am Mass. We are celebrating our parish's cultural diversity with a big pot-luck celebration under four general groups - European, Canadian/N. American, Asian and S. American. Wear an ethnic costume if you can!

Bring a Dish: Please bring a casserole-size dish of a meat, vegetable or noodle/pasta/rice dish or dessert with a label or small flag of the country you represent. Knights of Columbus will be at the church doors before Mass to receive your dish for placement at the table.

Coordinators Wanted: We need 8 volunteer coordinators to facilitate this event. Use the sign-up sheets at the front of the church or contact the parish office if you can help.

Cultural Performance: If you would like to share some music or a dance from your culture for this outdoor celebration, please contact the office.

Door Is Open

The next Door is Open outreach effort is on Tuesday June 6. The idea is to prepare lunch for the poor and homeless in Eastside Vancouver. We start at about 8am and finish at about 2:30pm. If you would like to help, please put your name down on the sign-up sheet. We need about 25 volunteers.

OLPH Triduum Mission & Feast

Archbishop Gerard Pettipas CsSR is our guest speaker at this year's Triduum Novena & Talks. This will climax with a special Mass to celebrate our feast day at 4pm on Sunday June 25 to be followed by a reception. All are invited. Bring a large dessert to share at the Sunday reception.

-Thurs Novena & Talk June 22: 6:45pm
 -Fri Novena & Talk June 23: 6:45pm
 -Sat Novena & Talk June 24: 6pm (After the 5pm Mass)
 -Sun June 25: Mass at 4pm (No Mass at 11am and 5pm)

YOUTH MINISTRY



An Evening of Bids and Blooms!

What a delightful evening of food and family fun we had on May 13 to celebrate Mother's Day! The dinner & dance fundraiser organized by OLPH Youth Ministry turned out to be a wonderful success for our youth preparing to go to Saskatoon and Grande Prairie for the Concert and Outreach program. Nearly \$3,500 was raised which would cover slightly more than half the expected costs.

Funds were raised through a silent auction for items donated by generous parishioners. Our youth put on a diverse program of entertainment. We had a mother/daughter act by Jackie and Eydie Cowley, a father/daughter performance by Abigail and Michael Henick. The solo performers were Morgan Nunez on clarinet, Claudia Mok who did a dance and Rosemary Vayalikunnel who recited a Mother's Day poem. Between MC Brendan and DJ Rey, we managed to get whole families on the dance floor for a really great close to the evening! Heartfelt thanks to all who donated, volunteered and supported this event and all the mothers who came!

