

Reflection for Saturday 15 May

On Thursday we celebrated the Feast of the Lord's Ascension into heaven. This event was the last of the Lord's resurrection appearances. He had spent the last 40 days from being raised from the dead by his Father living with his disciples and preparing them for the time when his physical presence would no longer be with them. But he was not going to leave them: they would still feel his presence with them. They would then be able to do even greater works than Jesus was able to do when he was visible.

In chapter 16 vs7ff Jesus explains to the disciples what he means by all this and how it would be possible for them to do these works. "Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away the Counsellor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.

In v13 Jesus goes on to say, "when the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth."

In other words Jesus speaks to them about the coming of the Holy Spirit. The Book of the Acts of the Apostles, which centres on Peter and later on Paul, is all about the wonderful work the Holy Spirit was able to do through these two men and others as well, and how lives were changed and the great number of people who were converted to the Lord.

When Jesus died on the cross the disciples were devastated. This when the Lord spoke of his departure this time, they were filled with joy. This is how St Luke describes it in the closing verses of his Gospel: vs 50 ff of chapter 24. "Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. While he blessed them, he parted from them, and was carried up into heaven. And they returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple blessing God."

There were nine days between the Ascension and the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost. The disciples would be time in prayer and praise of God for all that had happened since the Lord had been raised from the dead.

In these nine days or Novena we should be doing the same. Part of that praise should be asking God to fill us with Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit who has been with us since our baptism. May the Church be filled with the Spirit so that the good news of Jesus Christ may be proclaimed throughout our world.

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