

# The Ascension: Letting Go



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Before Mass, Deacon reminded me of our beautiful Ascension stained glass window over here. So as you leave Mass today, if you don't have a good view of it now, you might want to be inspired by it as you leave.



But also, over here in this corner, we have the beautiful stained-glass window of the Nativity, our Lord's Incarnation, which, ties in to the Ascension because our Lord's Ascension is really the crown of the Incarnation. Theologically, the Ascension, celebrates the completion of our Lord's earthly ministry, what we often refer to as the Paschal Mission, Paschal meaning the Passover, passing over from death to new life in the Resurrection. But it's really all of the life of Jesus, beginning with his Incarnation, coming to earth as God and man, his public ministry, beginning with his baptism in the Jordan, his suffering, death, Resurrection, post-Resurrection appearances, leading up to what we celebrate today, our Lord's Ascension.

And Jesus goes to heaven because, in his own words, "I must go so that the Holy Spirit may come," so that God's plan for human redemption and salvation may be fulfilled. And so Jesus goes to his throne in heaven amidst the trumpet blasts, and he takes his seat at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, where Jesus intercedes for us as our High Priest, Prophet, and King. He intercedes for us prayerfully as Priest, as Prophet, we continue to hear his word, and as King, we invite the Lord, we ask the Lord to become the ruler of our hearts, and we acknowledge his authority over all creation until he will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead. And all of this is our hope as that beautiful opening prayer to Mass said, that where Jesus, the head, has

gone, we, the body, hope to follow.

So these are beautiful theological points as we celebrate this most important feast day. As I was looking through preparing for Mass, and I was setting up my note back there, which is called the Sacramentary, I noticed that on the opposite page, on one side are my prayers, and on the other side is a beautiful painting.

It's a painting of the Ascension, but it's a lot different than that window because, in my book Jesus isn't yet airborne. He is still on the ground, and the disciples are all around him in very close quarters.

One of them has fallen asleep on him as he's standing there, and the other one is clinging to his cloak. And the image or the sense that I got from that is that they were saying, "Please don't go." And so that made me think, well, maybe there's, you know, amidst the beautiful theology of this day, there's a more personal and spiritual message for us. Is there something that we are clinging to, that we need to let go of in order that the Holy Spirit may come to us, in order that God's plan in us may be fulfilled?

And I'm not talking about sin here. We know we need to let go of sin in our thoughts. I'm talking about something good because Jesus was good. Is there something good in my life that I'm clinging to a bit too fiercely, that I need to, at the very least, loosen my grip on or let go?

Could it be a person I'm clinging to? How about an idea?

How about a memory? How about a feeling?

Or how about a thing? As we all know the saying, we can get too much of a good thing, and this is why the spiritual writers speak to us about

detachment, letting go of those things in life that impede God's will being accomplished in our lives.

And again, during this month of May, we have our Blessed Mother who said to the angel, "Let it be done to me according to your word." So let us rejoice today that Jesus has gone home to heaven where he continues to intercede for us and help us. May we spiritually prepare ourselves in nine days for the celebration of the birth of the Church and the giving of the Holy Spirit. And let us consider if there is something in our lives that we need to stop clinging to so that the Lord may send his Holy Spirit and God's will may be accomplished in us.

Happy Feast Day.

Reverend Robert Gillelan

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Please note: This written reflection was prepared as faithfully as possible using an audio transcript and written text of Father Robert Gillelan's homily. Minor formatting adjustments were made for readability.