

**THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD/  
7<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER EASTER**

May 15, 2010

QUEEN OF PEACE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY  
GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA  
Rev. Jeff McGowan

**1<sup>ST</sup> READING: ACTS 1: 1-11**

They said, "Men of Galilee why are you standing there looking at the sky?"

**PSALM 118**

**2<sup>ND</sup> READING: EPHESIANS 1: 17-23**

Brothers and sisters: may the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation resulting in knowledge of him.

**GOSPEL: LUKE 24:46-53**

Then he led them as far as Bethany and raised his hands and blessed them and as he blessed them he parted from them and was taken up to heaven.

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Did you hear about the college student arrested in Florida during Spring Break? He seems he was disturbing the peace or some such thing, and as they were about to lock him up he demanded to exercise his right to make one phone call. Half an hour later a delivery boy arrived at the jail and asked, "Who ordered the pizza?"

Clueless! That student was clueless about his situation. He was oblivious to his own reality. He gave no thought to the bigger picture. You know we're all like that sometimes. We so easily get into a frame of mind which we carry around with us. Even when the real world around us changes, we remain in our own private little universe.

I think that's why Jesus ascended to heaven. I mean, he didn't have to. Jesus is God, and God is everywhere, so to get to heaven he didn't have to ascend anyplace. So why did he have this dramatic ascension in front of his apostles? I think that the reason Jesus had them watch him ascend into heaven was he wanted to make them **LOOK UP**. They'd been walking around their whole lives looking down, looking at their own little world with their own private worries, and Jesus tried to tell them for years, *Hey, people, look up! There is a heaven up there with many mansions and you are going to go there!* But they didn't listen and kept looking down.

You know, I'll bet that the same is true of most people today. The entire universe for some people is a sphere only a few feet in diameter, with themselves at its center. That's true for tiny children, of course; we expect that. But as children grow up, their universe expands, as they begin to include other people, then the entire family, then their friends, then their neighborhood. Some people even reach a level of social maturity high enough to expand their mental horizon to include all of the entire Gulf of Mexico, or even the entire United States. A blessed few can even manage to consider the entire world as their world.

Today on the feast of the Ascension we are being invited to go beyond even that. Will you try an exercise with me? Right now, go ahead: Look up! No, not at me; **look UP!** What do you see; a lot of hot air? Then you're still looking at me. Look up! Yes; now look higher; what do you see: a ceiling? Look even higher! What's above the ceiling? More air? What's above that; the blue sky; the ozone layer; the cold blackness of outer space; the moon; the sun and the planets; the stars in our galaxy? Can you go beyond our galaxy; to other galaxies; all the way to the edge of the visible universe; ***can you expand your horizon to heaven?***

When was the last time you stretched your mind that far? Doesn't it feel good? It's good exercise for the mind and soul. A wise old monk, a veteran of living many years in a monastery with other monks, wrote that when ever you find yourself struggling with another person remind yourself that you are dying. Be serious about it, feel it. Then remind yourself that other person is in the same condition, also dying. You rarely hear anything but good things at a funeral.

They always tell us that we should stop and smell the roses. Good advice, I'd say. Today I offer you this simple thought: now and then stop and look up. Not while you're driving or walking down stairs, of course! But once in a while, when it's safe to do so, stop, look up, look beyond this passing world, and ponder the immensity of the world without end. Amen.