**The Ascension of the Lord, Cycle. C. 2025.**

**Fr. Pedro Aruppe S.J, who was Superior General of the Society of Jesus for 15 years**, narrates how he personally met Jesus and decided to follow him. Pedro was a brilliant student of medicine, winning many prizes in anatomical studies and therapeutics at t University of Madrid. Everyone predicted he would become a great doctor. In **October 1926, 19 year old Pedro went to Lourdes as a volunteer**. One day he accompanied the procession in front of the Grotto, walking beside a mother who was pushing a wheelchair in which sat her 26 year old son, a polio victim, his body crippled and completely deformed. The mother kept praying aloud: “**Holy Virgin, come to our a**id”: Then the bishop came with the Blessed Sacrament and made the sign of the cross with it over the boy. At that instant, the boy leapt from his chair, completely cured.

**Pedro says:** “I returned to Madrid, but the books kept falling from my hands. My fellow students asked me: “***What’s happening to you? You seem dazed! “***: ***Yes I was dazed by the memory which upset me more each day; only the image of the Sacred Host raised in blessing and the paralyzed boy jumping up from his chair remained fixed in my heart***”. Three months later, Pedro gave up his studies and entered the Novitiate of the Society of Jesus at Loyola.

Jesus **Christ Our Savior has opened for us the portals of Heaven**. His **Ascensio**n is the crowning of His mission. He has gone ahead of us to prepare a place for us. He invites us, “***Come follow me***”. St. Paul says. “***Those whom He called He also justified”***. It is Pauls’ firm conviction that if we have died with Christ, we shall also rise with Him in glory.

In Baptism we died with Christ and rose with him. In his letter to the Colossians, St. Paul exhorts us: “***If we have been raised with Christ, seeks the things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on the things that are above, not on things that are on earth***”. As we commemorate today the event of the Lord’s going up to Heaven, let our hearts also go up with Him.

 Christ has accomplished His work, sent the Holy Spirit to watch over the Church and has gone back to the Father. Yet, He is ever with us in the form of the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the homeless etc. If we really believe in loving and serving Christ in these needy brethren, then He who is seated at the right hand of the Father will tell us, “***O, Blessed of my father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you*** ***from the foundation of the world”.***

 Our permanent home is in the Kingdom of the Father. God has created us to be there with Him one day. But here on earth we should prepare ourselves in mind, will, and heart for paradise. **Life has travails and pains,** but happy is the one who goes through them with genuine love of God and neighbor. He will receive his crown.

Today, as the Church invites us to celebrate the Ascension of Jesus to the right hand of His Father, we must not look upon Him as being far away from us. It is true that Jesus has now gone back where He came, but He also lives among us. He continues to be born, to live and die for us, His followers. There are many people in the world today who do not believe in Jesus. Jesus wants that we bear witness to His presence in the world. These people will not believe unless they see Him and touch Him, in and through us. “***You must be my witnesses, Jesus says to us”***. We are His witnesses if, in spite of living in difficult and dangerous circumstances, we continue to trust in God and live according to His will.

 *Let our life be a convincing witness to God and grant us the grace that it may never be a counter-witness. Amen*