

Ascension: No Back-up Plan! 6/2/19

We are still in the mood of graduations. I had the privilege of attending a friend's graduation at Chicago. I did observe that the ceremony celebrated both an accomplishment and a commissioning. The candidates are sent forth to and witness what they have discovered. This brings us close to the celebration today. At the ascension we see Jesus accomplish his earthly ministry and return to the Father. At the same time, we see the commissioning of the apostles to witness to the good news. Jesus hands the baton to us to continue the mission of salvation in the world.

There is a legend about the ascension in Father Mark Wink's Sunday homilies. According to this legend, when Jesus ascended to heaven, his body still bore the marks of the crucifixion. The five marks of his hands, feet and head were visible for all to see. When the people in heaven saw the marks, they were all shocked to see how much he had suffered. When angel Gabriel saw him, he said to him 'Lord, how greatly you suffered on earth! He was so moved to see the nail marks, the head wounds and the signs of his suffering. He asked the Lord, do all the people on earth know and appreciate how much you went through for them and how much you love them?"

Jesus answered Gabriel, no! It's only a handful in Palestine who know that. The rest of the people have not even heard about. They don't know me, and they don't know how much I love them. Gabriel was surprised and asked again 'so how will all the rest of the people on earth ever learn about your suffering and your love for them? Jesus responded, "Just before I left, I told Peter, James and John, and a few of their friends, to tell the rest of the world for me. They will tell as many people as they can. Those people in turn will pass it on to other people till the whole world eventually learn about my love for them.

Gabriel was not done yet with his questions, he asked again, but Lord, what if Peter, James and John grow tired and frustrated at a point, what if they forget about you or even begin to doubt you? Didn't you take these into account, I mean don't you have a back-up plan? Jesus responded that he considered all these, but still decided against a back-up plan. He said, he counts on Peter, James and John not to let him down, he counts on the people they tell not to let him down.

Jesus says that he trusts they will not let him down. The baton has been passed on to us. We need to make known to the world how he suffered for us and how much he

loves us. Jesus does not think we will let him down because of tiredness and frustration and doubt. The way to begin making known to the world is to start with ourselves. There is a Chinese proverb that says *“if there is right in the soul, there will be beauty in the person, if there is beauty in the person there will be harmony in the home, if there is harmony in the home, there will be order in the nation. If there is order in the nation, there will be peace in the world”*.