

Reflection for the Ascension; Jesus prepares to be with us in a new way

(The Gospel of Matthew, chapter 28, verses 16-20)

Following Easter Day, Jesus visited his followers many times over 40 days. He told them that after the events of Easter he would now live forever and be with them always to help them – known as the Resurrection. But to be with everyone who wanted him, all over the world, he needed to be in a special place and to be with people in a special way. To remember this, we celebrate a feast day called the Ascension of the Lord. Jesus goes to live with God the Father in heaven so they could both send the Holy Spirit to us. The Holy Spirit is Jesus' special way of being with everyone who wishes to be close to him. Because God the Father is present everywhere, when Jesus joins him, he can be everywhere as well, and the Holy Spirit makes that happen. We celebrate this feast day of the Ascension of the Lord because Jesus has gone to be with God the Father and not only because the Holy Spirit will be sent to us, but also because we can go to this special place, which we call heaven, when our time comes to go and be with Jesus.

Not everyone knows about this and Jesus asks adults if they can show and tell them about him. So, Jesus asks adults to behave in way that he would, so that people might ask, why are you doing this? The answer is because this is the way that Jesus lived, and he would like everyone to behave this way. They could also invite them to learn more about Jesus if they were interested. Sadly, some are not, and their choice needs to be respected. Just as those who believe in Jesus deserve respect. At other times people might be talking about what they do on a Sunday morning and this might be another opportunity to invite others to get to know more about Jesus. He does not ask children to do this and many people wait until they are older to talk to others about Jesus. He would never ask anyone to do something that they do not feel ready to do. For children, giving a good example by being kind and helping others is just as important as what we say. But all of this is what we call mission – carrying on the work of Jesus, helped by the Holy Spirit. Many adults do this because they want people to know more about Jesus and they want us to know more about Jesus. Knowing Jesus better is something we can all do.

God bless you, Canon David