

The Ascension of the Lord- May 20/21, 2020 – Reflection

After people, God bless them, hear their Pastor speak over the period of a couple of years, they've pretty much heard everything he has to say as a preacher. They must get tired of hearing the same stories, groaning at the same tired jokes, and listening to descriptions of the same people in his family.

You've all heard me speak of my Slovak Grandmother who my family would visit in western Pennsylvania every summer for a whole month. Grandma spoke little English and talked to us grandkids almost like a cowboys and Indians movie: "You boy, eatem up," "You girl, close screen, not let flies in," "You boy, not pee on floor!"

But Grandma really did most of her talking to us with her hands: kneading the dough for the delicious breads she'd bake; canning the fruits, vegetables and pickles that tasted so good; stirring the wonderful soups she'd make literally out of anything; reading the prayer book she read from every afternoon in her rocking chair; working in the garden; feeding ducks and chickens and pigs and milking cows ... Grandma's hands were never idle, always working for her family in service to her God.

Come the day late in August or early September for us to go back home, and Grandma would get up before the chickens to have a full breakfast ready for us and then as we were heading to the door, she would press a quarter or silver dollar into each of our hands and give us a big hug, always with tears on her face, sad to see us hooligans

leaving. For the first hour of the car ride after saying goodbye to her, I would be all choked up and unable to speak.

Grandma died in 1980 - 40 years ago, but, despite all that time passing, her spirit is still with me, still with my family.

When He Ascended to the Father in heaven, Jesus left His disciples feeling sad and a little lost. But, He did not leave them on their own. He left His Spirit, His Holy Spirit with them ... and, with US. They were, at first, choked up, paralyzed with fear, but then they moved on to build a Church, a Church that would take the message of Jesus to the ends of the earth.

As the Church, we'll be reopening soon. It's not enough to sit spaced, silent, and side-lined. Filled with the Spirit of Christ, we need to roll up our sleeves and rebuild the faith in our part of the world, rebuild the Church.

"Men of Galilee," people of Millbury and beyond, "why are you standing there looking at the sky? This Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven will return in the same way as you have seen him going into heaven." Meanwhile, there's work to be done, a faith to be shared, a Church to be built. Now, go ... there's so much for you to do, but, "Behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age."

Amen.