

Forty days after Easter, we celebrate the Ascension of the Risen Jesus. It is the feast where Jesus ascended to heaven where he came from. He came down, he visited us for 33 years and then he came back up. Then what have we gained? He promised the Holy Spirit to us as we read in the Acts of the Apostles, "You will receive a force, that of the Holy Spirit which will come upon you. Then you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth "(Acts 1,9).

The Ascension sends us back to our mission on earth. As baptized and confirmed Christians, we have to testify of our faith in the risen Jesus. Some do so at the risk of their lives. There are many around the world who are persecuted because of their faith; they are forced to renounce their faith but they prefer to die rather than betray Christ. This good news is for everyone, not just the closest, the most receptive and the most welcoming; we are sent to carry Christ all over the world. He wants everyone to feel the warmth of his love and mercy. He really wants to bring them all together with him.

The Gospel of St. Matthew does not speak directly of the Ascension. But if we look closely, we see that his message is similar to that of the Acts of the Apostles. The event takes place in Galilee and it is a region from which no one could expect anything good; and it was a place of passage for caravans that came from everywhere. All beliefs and even unbelief clashed there. It is in this despised place that Jesus begins his ministry. And this is where the apostles will go to share the good news of the Gospel. It must be proclaimed worldwide. The Lord is looking for those who are far away, those who have gone astray, those who live in vice and sin. He calls them all to accept the good news of the gospel.

This celebration therefore reminds us of the purpose of our life. We imbibed the love that is in God and then we are sent to communicate it around us. This good news that we have to tell people of our time nothing should stop it. Violence, wars, disasters will not have the last word. The risen Christ wants to associate us all with his victory over death and sin.

My dear friends, this feast of the Ascension is an invitation to commit ourselves to proclaim the living God. Let us ask for the grace necessary to be witnesses of the love of God.