

ASCENSION WITH MOTHERS DAY  
FR. PETER'S HOMILY

Again, a very happy and blessed Mother's Day to all those special women in our lives!

As I mentioned in my homily last Sunday, my Mother has passed on.

It's hard to believe that it will be 15 years in December!

The Solemnity of the Ascension of Jesus which we celebrate today reminds us that where Jesus has gone, we hope to follow.

St. Paul marvels in the second reading: "What is the hope that belongs to his call, what are the riches of glory in his inheritance among the holy ones."

Jesus has taken our human nature, redeemed by his Cross and Resurrection, into the eternal life of heaven.

And as Jesus told us just a few weeks ago, he has gone to prepare a place for us in his Father's house.

In today's Gospel Jesus declares: "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned."

Belief in Jesus Christ as the Son of God is essential to salvation.

That is why the "Great Commission" is so important.

"Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature."

This is why the Church exists: To make known Jesus Christ.

We were baptized and confirmed for mission.

Through the Eucharist we are nourished and strengthened for mission.

As I explained a couple of weeks ago, the Latin dismissal at the end of Mass is "Ite, missa est."

"Go, you are sent ... you are missioned."

Do we take this mission that has been entrusted to us seriously enough?

Do we at least pray for those who do not believe in Christ?

On this Mother's Day I think of St. Monica who was reintroduced by Fr. Tom at our parish mission.

Monica was the mother of St. Augustine, who was a brilliant but unfocused young man. He did not share his mother's faith in Jesus.

She prayed every day for 20 years for his conversion.

Finally, he did convert and became one of the greatest saints in the history of the Church.

Mothers, grandmothers, never cease to pray for your children who have fallen away from the practice of the faith.

God sees your tears and hears your prayers.

Trust that God is working out his will in your child's life.

In today's Gospel Jesus predicts some of the miracles that believers will see:

- Demons will be driven out.
- New languages will be spoken.
- Deadly serpents will be handled safely.
- Poison will be drunk with no ill effect.
- The sick will recover their health.

An author I read wrote: "All of these visible miracles have in fact appeared many times in Christian history. But they are only signs of the essential miracle, which is God's invasion of our world, and our life in Christ, and the conversion of heart in accepting God's gift of supernatural life."

We may not see a demon driven out, but I have seen people converted from serious habits of sin.

We may not hear a new language spoken, but someone might speak God's word to us in a new way that really touches our heart.

I hope I never have to handle deadly serpents, but I have handled very difficult people through the grace of the Holy Spirit.

I would not suggest drinking poison, but we can all vanquish the poison of gossip and being judgemental.

I have seen the sick recover their health through the power of prayer and the anointing of the sick, but more often I have seen the sick receive the graces they need to sustain

them through their sickness and even to face death with the serenity that comes from faith.

Jesus has ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father, but he is also present among us working powerfully in our midst through the Holy Spirit.

Let us trust in Jesus' final words to us as recorded in Matthew's Gospel: "Know that I am with you always, even to the end of the world."