

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord

Today's Gospel is taken from the conclusion of the Gospel of Matthew. Matthew's Gospel quickly moves from the disciples' discovery of Jesus' empty tomb, to Jesus' appearance to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, to the commission that Jesus gives his disciples in today's Gospel.

The Final Commission, as this Gospel is sometimes called, is given on the mountaintop. Throughout Scripture, the most important events happen on the mountaintop, and Matthew has used this motif throughout his Gospel. Earlier in Matthew's Gospel, Peter, James, and John had seen Jesus transfigured on the mountaintop ([Matthew 17:1-8](#)). Also in the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus taught the crowds from the mountaintop in what we now call the Sermon on the Mount.

Here we are told that the eleven disciples go the mountaintop in Galilee, as Jesus had instructed through Mary Magdalene and the other Mary (cf. [Matthew 28:9-10](#)). They see Jesus, and both worship and doubt at the same time. Jesus approaches them and commissions them to baptize and teach, "to make disciples of all nations." It is a task which Jesus had previously prepared his disciples for; recall that Jesus had sent the twelve apostles to preach the Kingdom of God and to heal (cf. [Matthew 10:1-15](#)). However, earlier the Twelve were sent only to the House of Israel; in this Final Commission, the eleven are told to go to "all nations." The mission of Jesus is now to be taken to all people; the task now is to baptize and to teach.

Jesus commissions his disciples to baptize in the name of the Trinity, one of the clearest attestations found in Scripture for baptism in the name of the Trinity. In the Acts of the Apostles and in the Letters of Paul, baptism is more frequently offered "in the name of Jesus."

The ending of Matthew's Gospel can be understood as the beginning of the Church. Jesus commissions his disciples to continue to teach in his name and to bring others into the community of disciples through baptism. The Gospel ends, as it had begun, with the promise that Jesus

will continue to be Emmanuel, "God with us" (cf. Matthew 1:23), for all eternity.

So let us all be reminded of our commissioning. Whatever walks of life we are in, we are commissioned by our lord to go out of our comfort zones and proclaim the good news. It might be worth asking ourselves if ever I take an effort to speak about my faith to others. Do I speak about Christ and the good news he brought to us. If not let this solemnity be a challenge for us

**Wishing you all a peaceful and serene time. Stay safe and healthy.
May the blessings of risen Christ fill you with hope.**

SEND O LORD, HOLY APOSTLES INTO YOUR CHURCH.

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