

Fr Rudy's Reflections

Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord

May 12, 2024

### The Grace and Glory of Ascension Day

My Brothers and Sisters in the Risen Lord,

Happy Mother's Day to all our dear, steadfast mothers. May you enjoy this special day!

Today we celebrate one of the most important feasts of our Church calendar: the commemoration of Jesus's bodily ascension into heaven, as he is seated at the right hand of his Father. With beautiful symbolic language that embraces all our Scripture readings today, we relive the moment Jesus rises to his glory as our Prince of Peace to reign over all creation and to inspire each of us to continue his ministry here on earth. He is not a vague person from the past or a heroic figure we might read about in a book; rather, he is actively present in our lives and in his Church forevermore. His ascension is the meeting of heaven and earth—God's will and purpose—bringing light into darkness and hope into suffering hearts.

There are a multitude of artistic images that celebrate the Ascension, from depictions in early centuries, to artists of the Baroque and Renaissance periods such as Rembrandt, to more modern interpretations by artists such as Salvador Dalí. These symbolic portrayals often show both Christ's humanity and his divinity in great dramatic form. Sometimes, however, it is in the words of wise others who can inspire us on this day:

*"This is the grace of Ascension Day: to be taken up into the heaven of our own souls, the point of immediate contact with God. Heaven is where God is present within each of us, closer to us than any human being. . .there is no need to look up into the sky. . .but rather to turn our glance inward."*—Thomas Merton

*"Today our Lord Jesus Christ ascended into heaven; let our hearts ascend with him."*—St. Augustine

*"Be deeply conscious of Christ's victory and triumph over sin and death. Realize that the strength of Christ is greater than our weakness, greater than the weakness of the whole world. . .And renew your faith today in the promise of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has gone to prepare a place for us, so that he can come back again and take us to himself."*—St. Pope John Paul II

*"With the Ascension, something new and beautiful happened: Jesus brought our humanity into heaven, that is, in God. That humanity that he had assumed on earth did not remain here. It ascended into God and there it will remain forever."*—Pope Francis

*"The Ascension is Jesus' journey not to another place, but to another dimension. But this dimension to which he has gone is not alien to us. It is instead a source of inspiration, power, and direction. And this is why the angels who appear to the disciples just after Jesus' departure say, 'Men of Gallilee, why are you standing there looking at the sky?' What are they hinting at—none too subtly—is this: under the influence of Jesus' spirit, get to work! Do all you can to foster the marriage of heaven and earth! Get on with the mission of the Church."*—Bishop Robert Barron

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Rudy