

'I CAME TO BRING FIRE'

THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD, MAY 24th



“The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them.

When they saw him, they worshiped, but they doubted.

Then Jesus approached and said to them, “All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”

(Matthew 28:16-20)

I. ALL POWER HAS BEEN GIVEN TO ME:

Father, You, along with the Son and the Holy Spirit are One God. You are Almighty and have all power over everything in the universe, over everyone and every event.; for you nothing is impossible; whatever you want is done. There is nothing, not a person, or any other creature that can resist your Omnipotence; increase my faith in Your power. Help me to

believe, as Mary, that for You my God, nothing is impossible. O my Jesus, if I rely totally in your power, I will be able to experience just as Saint Paul that: “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me” (Phil 4:13)

Salvation is about the power of God working, throughout human history, in the hearts of those who convert and believe in the Kingdom of God. That is, in God. The Kingdom is manifested in the powerful works of God. Jesus came to display and proclaim the power of God by overcoming evil: “*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.*

He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.” Then he began to say to them, “*Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.*” (Lk 4:18-21) Evil is expelled, “*if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come to you.*” (Mt 12:28)

Do I believe in the power of God?

The question is not whether or not we believe in some kind of power, but **if we believe that He, our God, is Almighty and that everything here and now is because of His power, especially our inner selves.**

Do I believe and understand that Satan has no power, before God?

It is not whether we believe in the power of God and the lack of power in Satan, or in the sense of answering yes to an article of faith, but it is about if we believe that the truth will change our way of living? If not, then there are doubts about what we believe.

Jesus is the Son of God, the Person who is also Divine, He is eternally God Almighty; and because of his love for us and for our salvation in time, He took on human flesh. He is one Nature, one God with the Father and the Holy Spirit and is, obviously, Almighty. In this text of the Gospel, as usual, Jesus refers to His humanity, in which He has been given, from the Father, all power. God, the Father, has given Jesus, as a human, all power in his historical life to teach us how God uses His almighty power, for love, for serving, to be in communion with us and how His power is born from the communion of love among us. “*Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God,*” (Jn 13:3) he began to wash the feet of the disciples, so he place himself as an servant before the others, move by love and humility; “*Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet*” (Jn 13:12-14)

In His resurrection He received all power necessary for our sanctification in all situations, this is the core of the Gospel message: the power of God works within us: “*the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord.*” (Rm 1:3-4) Further in this same letter, Saint Paul clarifies: “*I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, "The one who is righteous will live by faith."*” (Rm 1:16)





Faith is about the power of God, working for the salvation and holiness of those who believe; for those who believe in His love, in Jesus crucified and resurrected.

When we go to prayer, we need to try to bring to our hearts the one who is within us, the Almighty: “him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine” (Eph 3:20)

II. I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS

UNTIL THE END OF THE AGE:

Petition: Jesus you are always with me, I believe and know this. I know that you are the Good Shepherd and that are always with your sheep; You gave your life for me, so that I might have eternal life, life in abundance. Even when I stray from You because of my selfishness, You leave the 99 other sheep to save me. Please, never let me doubt that You are always with me no matter what occurs.

Jesus did not go and leave us alone, He left so that He could be with us. Always sharing his divine life, pouring His gifts into us so that we can begin to love with Him. Both Prefaces of the Solemnity of the Ascension indicate that the departure of Christ to Heaven is for him to be with us and always giving to us: “For after his Resurrection he plainly appeared to all his disciples and **was taken up to heaven in their sight, that he might make us sharers in his divinity.**” And even clearer, “Mediator between God and man, judge of the world and Lord of hosts, **he ascended, not to distance himself from our lowly state but that we, his members, might be confident of following where he, our Head and Founder, has gone before.**” (Prefaces of the Mass of the Ascension of the Lord II & I)

Saint Paul said the same: “When he ascended on high he made captivity itself a captive; **and he gave gifts to his people.** He who ascended far above all the heavens, **so that he might fill all things.**” (Eph 4:8,10)

Maybe the problem is our idea of Heaven. We tend to believe that it is a physical place, when in reality, Heaven is God, it is eternal life. So it is not a place, but more of a way of existing and living, from God, in God, with God and for God; “Who Art in Heaven” is a biblical expression that “**does not mean a place** (“space”), **but a way of being; it does not mean that God is distant, but majestic.** Our Father is not “elsewhere”: he transcends everything we can conceive of his holiness. It is precisely because he is thrice-holy that he is so close to the humble and contrite heart.” (Catechism, 2794)

In fact, this is what the Saints say about Heaven: “Our Father who art in

heaven” **is rightly understood to mean that God is in the hearts of the just, as in his holy temple, and at the same time, it means that those who pray should desire the one they invoke to dwell in them**” St. Agustin). St. Cyril of Jerusalem: “Heaven” could also be those who bear the image of the heavenly world, **and in whom God dwells and remains.**” Both are quoted in the Catechism to aid in explaining the meaning of “Our Father who are in Heaven” (2794)

When People of God, talk about Jesus being in Heaven, they profess that they are, “**already seated "with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus" and "hidden with Christ in God;"** (Eph 2:6; Col 3:3) yet at the same time, **"here indeed we groan, and long to put on our heavenly dwelling."** (2 Cor 5:2; cf. Phil 3:20; Heb 13:14)

“But in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, and through whom He made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of His nature, upholding all things by His powerful word. **After He had provided purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.**” (Hb 1:2-3)

III. THANKSGIVING FOR THE KING’S VICTORY (Ps 21:2-8):

O Lord, your strength gives joy to the king;
how your saving help makes him glad!
You have granted him his heart’s desire;
you have not refused the prayer of his lips.

You came to meet him with the blessings of success,
you have set on his head a crown of pure gold.
He asked you for life and this you have given,
days that will last from age to age.

Your saving help has given him glory.
You have laid upon him majesty and splendor,
you have granted your blessings to him forever.
You have made him rejoice with the joy of your presence.

The king has put his trust in the Lord:
through the mercy of the Most High he shall stand firm.
O Lord arise in your strength; we shall sing and praise your power.

Fr. Armando Marsal, DCJM.

