

## Sunday After the Ascension of Our Lord 13 May 2018

Dom Prosper Gueranger in his book, *The Liturgical Year Vol. 9* comments on today's liturgy: "Jesus has ascended into heaven. His Divinity had never been absent; but, by the Ascension, His Humanity was also enthroned there, and crowned with the brightest diadem of glory. This is another phase of the mystery we are now solemnizing. Besides a triumph, the Ascension gave to the sacred Humanity a place on the very throne of the eternal Word, to whom it was united in unity of Person. From this throne, it is to receive the adoration of men and of angels. At the name of Jesus, Son of Man, and Son of God,-- of Jesus who is seated at the right of the Father almighty, -- '*Every knee shall bend, in heaven, on earth and in hell*' (Phil. 2:10).

Give ear, O ye inhabitants of earth! This the Man Jesus, who heretofore was, a little Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes; who went through Judea and Galilee, not having where to lay His head; who was bound by the sacrilegious hand of his enemies, was scourged, crowned with thorns nailed to a cross; who, whilst men thus trampled Him as a worm, beneath their feet, submitted His will to that of His Father, accepted the chalice of suffering, and, that he might make amends to the divine glory, shed His Blood for the redemption of your sinners. This Man Jesus, child of Adam through Mary the Immaculate, is the master-piece of God's omnipotence. He is '*the most beautiful of the sons of men*' (Ps.64:3); the angels love to fix their gaze upon Him (I Pt. 1:21); the Blessed Trinity is well-pleased with Him; the gifts of grace bestowed on Him surpass all that men and angels together have ever received. But He came to suffer, and suffer for you; and though He might have redeemed you at a much lower price, yet would he generously overpay your debts by a superabundance of humiliation and suffering. What reward shall be given to Him? The apostle tells us in these words: '*He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death even to the death of the cross; for which cause God also has exalted Him, and hath given Him a name, which is above all names.*' (Phil. 2: 8-9)

You, then who compassionate with Him in the suffering whereby He wrought your redemption; you who devoutly follow Him in the

stages of His sacred Passion; now raise up your heads, and look up to the highest heaven! Behold this Jesus '*crowned with glory and honour because he suffered death*'! (Heb. 2:9) See how the Father has magnified Him in return for His having '*emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant,*' (Phil. 2:6-7) though in his other nature, He was equal with God. His crown of thorns is replaced by a crown of precious stones. (cf. Ps. 20:4) The cross that was laid on his shoulder is now the ensign of His power (cf. Is. 9:6). The wounds made by the nails and the spear are now like five bright suns that light up all heaven. Glory, then, be to the justice of the Father, who has dealt thus with His Son! Let us rejoice at seeing the Man of sorrows (cf. Is. 53:3) become now the King of glory; and let us with all the transport of our soul, repeat the *hosanna* wherewith the angels welcomed Him into heaven.

Nor must we suppose that the Son of Man now that He is seated on the throne of His Divinity, is inactive in his glorious rest. No; the sovereignty bestowed upon Him by the Father, is an active one. First of all, He is appointed Judge of the living and of the dead, (Acts 10:42) before whose judgement-seat we must all stand (Rom. 14:10). No sooner shall our soul have quitted the body, than she shall be presented before this tribunal, and receive from the lips of the Son of Man the sentence she will have deserved. O Jesus! By the glory Thou didst receive on the day of thine Ascension, have mercy on us at that moment whereon depends eternity.

But the judgship of our Lord Jesus Christ is not to be confined to this silent exercise of His sovereign power. The angels, who appeared to the apostles after His Ascension, told us that He is to come again upon the earth; that He is to descend through the clouds, as He ascended; and that then shall be the last judgement, at which the whole human race is to be present! Throned on a cloud, and surrounded by the angelic host, the Son of Man will show Himself to mankind, and this time with all majesty. Men shall see Him whom they pierced (cf. Zach. 12:10); the imprints of those wounds, which will give additional beauty to His sacred Body, will be an object of terror to the wicked, while to the good they will be a source of unspeakable consolation. The shepherd, seated on His ethereal throne, will separate the goats

from the sheep. His voice, after so many ages of silence, will make itself once more heard upon the earth: He will speak to impenitent sinners, condemning them to eternal torments; he will speak to the just, calling them to approach Him, and ascend, body and soul, into the regions of everlasting bliss.

Meanwhile, He exercises over all nations the royal power, which he received, as Man, on the day of His Ascension. He redeemed us all by His Blood; we are therefore His people, and He is our King. He is, and He calls Himself, '*King of kings and Lord of lords.*' (Apoc. 19:16). The kings of the earth reign not either by their own prowess, or by the boasted social compact; they lawfully reign by Christ alone. People and nations are not their own masters; they belong to Christ and are His subjects. His law requires no sanction from man; it is above all human laws, and should be their guide and controller. '*Why have the nations raged, and the people devised vain things? The kings of the earth stood up and the princes met together, against the Lord and against His Christ. They said: 'Let us break their bonds asunder, and let us cast away their yoke from us.'*' (Ps. 2:1-3) How vain all these efforts! For, as the apostle says, '*he must reign, until He has put all His enemies under His feet,*' (I Cor. 15:25) that is, until His second coming, when the pride of man and Satan's power shall both be at an end.

Thus, then, the Son of Man, crowned at His Ascension, must reign over the world to the end of time. But it will be objected: 'How can He be said to reign in these our times, when kings and emperors and presidents acknowledge that their power comes from the people; and when the people themselves, carried away with the ideas of self-government and liberty and independence, have lost all idea of authority?' And yet, He reigns; He reigns in His justice, since men refused to be guided by his clemency. They expunged His law from their statutes; they gave the rights of citizenship to error and blasphemy: then did He deliver them up, both people and rulers to their own follies and lies. Authority and power have become ephemeral: and as they scorn to receive the consecration of the Church, the hand that holds them to-day, may be empty to-morrow. Then anarchy, then a new ruler, and then a fresh revolution. This will be the future as it is the present, history of

nations until they once more acknowledge Jesus as their King, and resume the constitution of the ages of faith: 'It is Christ that conquers! It is Christ that reigns! It is Christ that commands! May Christ preserve His people from all evil!'

On this Thy coronation-day, receive our devoted homage, O Jesus, our King, our Lord, our Judge! By our sins we were the cause of Thy humiliations and sufferings; so much the more fervently then do we unite with the acclamations made to thee by the angels when the royal diadem was placed on Thy head by the eternal Father. As yet, we but faintly see the grandeur; but the holy Spirit, whom thou art about to send upon us, will teach us more and more of Thy sovereign power, for we are, and wish to be eternally, Thy humble and faithful subjects!

In the middle-ages, the Sunday within the octave of the Ascension was called *the Sunday of roses*, because it was the custom to strew the pavement of the churches with roses, as a homage to Christ who ascended to heaven when the earth was in the season of flowers. How all the Christians of those times appreciated the harmony that God has set between the world of grace and that of nature! The feast of the Ascension, when considered in its chief characteristic, is one of gladness and jubilation, and spring's loveliest days are made for its celebration. Our forefathers had the spirit of the Church; they forgot for a moment, the sadness of poor earth at losing her Emmanuel, and they remembered how He said to His apostles: '*If ye love Me, ye would be glad because I go to the Father!*' (Jn. 14:28) Let us do in like manner; let us offer to Jesus the roses wherewith He has beautified our earth: Their beauty and fragrance should make us think of Him who made them, of Him who calls Himself the flower of the field and the lily of the valleys. (Cant. 2:1) He loved to be called Jesus of Nazareth; for Nazareth means a flower; and the symbol would tell us what a charm and sweetness there is in Him whom we serve and love as our God.'" Gueranger, *The Liturgical Year*, Vol. 9, pp. 206-211.

### May is the Month of Mary:

Pope St. John Paul II spoke of the importance of devotion to Our Lady and the Family Rosary: "The Christian family finds and consolidates its identity in prayer. Make the

daily effort to find a time to pray together, to talk with Our Lord and listen to his voice. How beautiful it is when the family prays in the evening, even though it be only a part of the Rosary. The family that prays together stays together; a family that prays is a family that is saved. Act in such a way that your home may be a place of Christian faith and virtue through your praying together.” (*Address to families*, 24 March 1984)

## May, Our Lady’s Month

St. Maximilian Kolbe spoke of all those who are consecrated to the Immaculate: **“She penetrates our soul and directs its faculties with unlimited power. We truly belong to Her. Therefore, we are with Her always and everywhere...”**(SK 461)

And further still: **“We are Hers, of the Immaculate, unlimitedly Hers, perfectly Hers, we are, as it were, Her very self. She, by means of us, loves the good God. She, with our poor heart, loves Her divine Son. We become the means by which the Immaculate loves Jesus, and Jesus, seeing that we are Her property, a part, as it were, of His most loving Mother, loves Her in and through us. What beautiful mysteries!”** Sk 508

St. Maximilian declared that those who are consecrated to the Immaculate would be a means of holiness and grace to others (especially their own family): **“She needs to be brought into all hearts,’ so that She, upon entering into these hearts, may give birth there to the sweet Jesus, to God, and bring Him up even to that perfect age. What a beautiful mission!”** SK508

St. Louis de Montfort tells us of Total Consecration to Mary: **“This devotion consists, therefore, in giving ourselves entirely to the Most Blessed Virgin that, through her we may belong entirely to Jesus Christ. We must give her: (1) our body with all its senses and members; (2) our soul with its powers; (3) our material possessions and all that we may acquire; (4) our interior and spiritual possessions—our merits, our virtues and our good works, past, present, and future; in short, all that we possess in the order of nature, in the order of grace ...”** St. Louis de Montfort, *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary*, p. 88-9