

ASCENSION (THURSDAY)

In Genesis we read of the disobedience of man. Despite given the gifts of the earth and the greatest gift of that close relationship with God, he along with Eve want more and for their act of disobedience they are warned that life would now be hard. But the greatest consequence was their banishment from Paradise and that knowledge that they no longer had such intimate access to God. Banishment from the garden is the “No” of God. “No” to acts of living and being and choosing ways of life that disregard God’s holy fraternal care and love.

And so man went on his way, in the accounts of the Scriptures he forever descended deeper into selfishness, and further away from the bosom of the Father. There were acceptations. There were those who broke through beyond the prison of their own sin and reconnected with the vision of the Father for that perfect union with Him once again, but for the most part humanity reflects the same old attitudes. Adams sin begins with “taking”, taking without being offered, taking while forbidden to do so. Man takes and history shows that if man wants; man takes and hang the consequences.

But God never gives up. He gives up on no one; and we have spent the last 40 days since Easter trying to grasp the reality and the truth of this. Ever since God walked the roads of his broken creation in the person of Jesus, the work of our return to that intimate relationship with Him, that return to His Bosom began in earnest, and just as we took our destruction from the tree of life in that first Paradise, Jesus gives us back Paradise by offering us the fruit of redemption from the tree of life which is His cross.

And today, finally, we rejoice because the moment that Jesus ascends and returns to the Father God completes for us the way back to him. If expulsion from that intimate relationship with Him in the garden was His “No”, then Jesus ascending to Him, returning to Him with our humanity is God’s final and decisive “Yes”. What we were, with our myriad of sins, the culmination of that primordial “take” mentality; what we are, people on the road to “becoming”, works in progress; and what we shall be, raised up with God in the Kingdom with Jesus at His right side, is the purpose and goal of Christ’s Ascension.

We are saved from ourselves by the “yes” of God as it is offered to us through Jesus. We are saved by the mysteries of his passion and resurrection united with his ascension. As the Litany of the Saints prays, “Through thy death and burial, through thy holy resurrection, through thy admirable ascension, deliver us O Lord”.

Amen.