Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord (B)

Gospel text (*Mk* 16:15-20): Jesus said to them; “Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned. These signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will drive out demons, they will speak new languages. They will pick up serpents [with their hands], and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not harm them. They will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.” So then the Lord Jesus, after he spoke to them, was taken up into heaven and took his seat at the right hand of God. But they went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word through accompanying signs.

“The Lord Jesus, after he spoke to them, was taken up into heaven and took his seat at the right hand of God”

Fr. Lluc TORCAL Monk of Santa Maria de Poblet
(Santa Maria de Poblet, Tarragona, Spain)

Today, on the solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord, we are offered a Word of Salvation unlike any we could have imagined. The Lord Jesus has not only risen, defeating death and sin, but has also been taken up into the glory of God! Thus, the path back to the Father, the path we had lost and that was opened to us in the mystery of Christmas, has been irrevocably offered to us today, after Christ fully gave Himself to the Father on the Cross.

Offered? Yes, offered. For the Lord Jesus Christ, before being taken up to Heaven, sent His beloved disciples, the Apostles, to invite all men to believe in Him, to reach where He is. "Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned" (Mk 16:15-16).

This salvation that is given to us ultimately consists of living the very life of God, as the Gospel according to Saint John tells us: "Now this is eternal life, that they should know you, the only true God, and the one whom you sent, Jesus Christ" (Jn 17:3).

But what is given out of love must be accepted in love to be received as a gift. Jesus Christ, whom we have never seen, wants us to offer Him our love through our faith, which we receive by listening to the word of His ministers, whom we can indeed see and listen to. "We believe in Jesus whom we have not seen: they announced Him, that saw, that handled, that heard the word out of His own mouth... And faithful is He that promised; He deceives not you: only do not faint, but wait for the promise... Keep the

faith, and He keeps His promise" (Saint Augustine). If faith is an offering of love to Jesus Christ, preserving and growing it increases charity within us.

Let us, therefore, offer our faith to the Lord!

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “He who for our sake became like us in order to make us his brothers, now presents to his true Father his own humanity in order to draw all his kindred up after him.” (Saint Gregory of Nyssa)

- “In our life we are never alone: we have this Advocate who awaits us, who defends us. The Crucified and Risen Lord guides us.” (Francis)

- “Baptism is the sacrament of faith. But faith needs the community of believers. It is only within the faith of the Church that each of the faithful can believe. The faith required for Baptism is not a perfect and mature faith, but a beginning that is called to develop. The catechumen or the godparent is asked: ‘What do you ask of God's Church?’ the response is: ‘Faith!’.” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, Nº 1253)