Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord (C)

Gospel text (*Lk* 24:46-53): Jesus said to his disciples: "Thus it is written that the Christ would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day and that repentance, for the forgiveness of sins, would be preached in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And behold I am sending the promise of my Father upon you; but stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

Then he led them out as far as Bethany, raised his hands, and blessed them. As he blessed them he parted from them and was taken up to heaven. They did him homage and then returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and they were continually in the temple praising God.

"As he blessed them he parted from them and was taken up to heaven"

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Today, on the Ascension of our Lord, we once more remember the "mission" that we have been entrusted with: "You are witnesses of these things" (Lk 24:48). God's Word is still alive today: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Also today, there is a current and urgent demand for the Word of God: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations" (Mt 28:19); "He said to them, 'Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature'" (Mk 16:15).

On this Solemnity, this commission from our Master strongly reverberates. Jesus —wrapped up in our humanity— has completed his mission in the world, left us to sit at the right hand of the Father, and sent us strength from above —the Holy Spirit.

I cannot but wonder: —Is the Lord acting through me? What are the signs attached to my testimony? And I remember the verse of the poet: "You cannot wait for God to tell you: 'I am'. A God that reveals his power does not make sense. You should know God blows through you from the very beginning, and if your chest burns and shows nothing, then God is working in it."

And this must be our sign: the fire burning inside, the fire that —as with the prophet Jeremiah— cannot be stopped: The Word of God is alive. And one feels like saying: "All you peoples, clap your hands; shout to

God with joyful cries… God has gone up with a shout; the LORD, amid trumpet blasts. Sing praise to God, sing praise; sing praise to our king, sing praise” (Ps 47:2.6-7).

His kingdom is germinating in people's hearts —in your heart— like a seed about to bear fruit: Sing, dance, for your Lord. And, if you do not know how to, place the Word in your lips until it comes down to your heart: God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, give me the spirit of wisdom and revelation so that I can get to know you. Throw your light upon the eyes of my heart so that I understand the hope you are showing me, the wealth of the glory you have ready for me, and the greatness of your power that you have displayed with the resurrection of Christ.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “Christ has many members, but one body. Out of compassion for us he descended from heaven, and although he ascended alone, we also ascend, because we are in him by grace” (Saint Augustine)

- “The Lord draws the gaze of the Apostles -our gaze- toward Heaven to show how to travel the road of good during earthly life. We can hear, see and touch our Lord Jesus in the Church, especially through the word and the sacraments” (Benedict XVI)

- “Christ permanently exercises his priesthood in heaven, for he always lives to make intercession for those who draw near to God through him. As ‘high priest of the good things to come’ (Hb 9:11) he is the centre and the principal actor of the liturgy that honours the Father in heaven” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, Nº 662)