

HOMILY ASCENSION YRC 2019

In the old West, one of the major means of transportation was the stagecoach. They had three tickets, first, second and third class. If you had a first class ticket you could remain seated for the whole trip regardless of what happened. If the stagecoach for stuck I the mud, or had trouble making it up a steep hill, or even if a wheel fell off you could remain seated. If you had a second class ticket, you could remain seated until there was a problem, and then you had to get off until the problem was resolved. You could stand off to the side and watch other people work to resolve the problem, but you did not have to get your hands dirty. If you had a third class ticket you had a seat until there was a problem, then you had to get off and you also had the responsibility of fixing the problem.

I think this represents three different types of spirituality. Those with the first class tickets were like those with what I call Old Testament spirituality. When something bad happened in their lives or they wanted something they would complain to God and wait for him to fix the problem. When they were in slavery in Egypt, they complained to God and God sent them Moses to lead them to the Promised Land. When they were hungry in the desert, they complained to God and he sent them manna from heaven. When they got tired of the manna they complained to God and he sent them quail, meat to eat. They were like the first class ticket holders who sat on the stage coach and waited for God to fix the problem. Those who had second class ticket were kind of like the disciples when Jesus walked the earth in a human body for 33 years. They just watched Jesus, listened to his teaching, and some of them learned how to live life as God intended. Some of them watched and believed. Some of them watch and did not believe and some of them did not pay much attention. None of them did a whole lot. They let Jesus fix things for them. Those who had a third class ticket were kind of like the disciples after the Ascension who decided to do what Jesus instructed them. In the Gospel reading right before the Ascension, Jesus is giving them some final instructions and they asked him: "Lord, are you at this time

going to restore the Kingdom to Israel?” They wanted to go back to that Old Testament Spirituality where they complained to God and they just waited for him to fix things. Then Jesus ascended into heaven and stood there staring up at the sky. He sent angels from heaven to tell them don’t just stand there staring up, go spread the Gospel to the ends of the earth as Jesus told you.

Jesus is with us always, caring for us and loving us, but we are his hands and feet in the world today. That is what we are called to do in this period between the Ascension and the second coming of Jesus. But sometimes we want to be first class ticket holders. We want to just sit there and wait for God to fix things. When I hear people say: “All I can do is pray,” I think maybe, but maybe there is something else you can do to work with God in fixing things. Maybe you don’t know how. Maybe you need to be a second class ticket holder for a while. Maybe you need to learn from Jesus through what is recorded in the Gospels. Maybe you need to establish a closer relationship with God so that you can work with him in fixing things. But all of us need to strive to become third class ticket holders. As disciples of Jesus Christ we are all called to be his hands and feet in the world. All of us are called to spread the Gospel to the ends of the earth. Each of us needs to decide how we are called to do that. It may be by getting more involved here at St. Edith to make things happen. I would like to find everyone a place at the table so you can all be part of what we do here. Maybe you are one of the people that welcome people when they get here and invite them to become involved. Maybe you are someone who is out there inviting people to St. Edith. Maybe you are living a good Christian life and preaching volumes by your example. Maybe you are involved in Christian Service activities putting a good face on the Catholic Church. We all need to become third class ticket holders. How are you going to do that?