

HOMILY ~ THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD

May 28/29, 2022

Tears and fears and feeling proud
to say, "I love you" right out loud.
Dreams and schemes and circus crowds,
I've looked at life that way.

But now my friends are acting strange.
They shake their heads, they say I've changed.
Well something's lost, but something's gained
in living every day.

I've looked at life from both sides now
from win and lose and still somehow
it's life's illusions I recall
I really don't know life at all.

Do you ever think that you do not know life at all? As we live every day, we can learn and gain wisdom; but we still need to acknowledge that life is a journey, and we never have it quite figured out. But we can move forward with God's help.

Today we celebrate the Feast of the Ascension. On this day, we remember how Jesus ascended into heaven. This is a time of transition. During this time between the Resurrection and the Ascension, Jesus keeps the disciples together so they could support and strengthen one another. Jesus continued to prepare them for the time that he would no longer be with them physically. With the post-Resurrection appearances, Jesus was still with them in a way that they could see him. After spending three years with Jesus listening to his teaching, watching his example and seeing his miracles, after watching him die on the cross and seeing that he was raised from the dead, they still do not quite get it. They ask him: *"Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom of Israel?"* They still think they are going to go back to the golden age when David was king, with Jesus as the king. They were still preoccupied with worldly matters. They were still waiting for Jesus to take care of everything for them. But it was time to take the things they learned and the wisdom they gained and move forward. They needed to do more than talk about it. They needed to take action.

We are in a time of transition between Easter and Ordinary Time. Did we make spiritual progress during Lent and Easter in prayer, almsgiving and fasting? What did we learn? Is the ten minutes of personal prayer each day going to become twenty? Is the almsgiving going to become volunteer work at church or in the community? Are you going to stick with the random acts of kindness? We need to continue to move forward. We are in a time of transition between the pandemic and the post pandemic world. We need to look at what we have learned and the wisdom we have gained. Are you living life in isolation? Is this healthy for you? Is it time to reconnect as a Parish community? We are trying at St. Edith to provide opportunities to come together as a community and strengthen one another. Come to Mass, stay for coffee and donuts or spaghetti or pizza or one of the other activities. What are we going to do about all of the hate and division in the world? Are we

going to just keep blaming the evil other or is it time to take action? We are all deeply saddened by the killing of our children in our schools. Finding more people to blame is not going to help the situation. Maybe we need to find out why so many people are so angry and why anyone would want to engage in this violent behavior. No one wakes up one morning and decides to shoot up a school. Do we let our friends and family become so isolated that we do not see the warning signs? Do we ignore the warning signs when we see them? Maybe we need to do a better job at reaching out to people who are troubled. Maybe they need formal counseling or maybe they just need some meaningful conversations with people that love them before it becomes a crisis. Suicide rates among our young people and our LGBTQ people have increased significantly during COVID. That is why we are having the presentation on suicide this Tuesday so we can see the signs and help each other. It will not solve the problem, but it is one step. Are we just going to wait for Jesus to take care of everything? That would be nice, but he did not do that 2,000 years ago, and he is unlikely to do that today. We need to take what we have learned by living every day, take the wisdom, and with God's help and direction, take action. I think it is going to have a lot to do with loving and serving the people around us, one person at a time.

Love & Peace,

Fr. Jim