

**SOLEMNITY OF THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD “A”
MAY 31/JUNE 1, 2014**

Today’s celebration Jesus’ Ascension into heaven is not about God rewarding Jesus for what he did on earth, nor a ticket out of the world! Jesus’ ascension celebrates his return to his rightful place with the Father as the pre-existent Son of God. Ascending to heaven, Jesus did not absent himself from relationship and involvement with us. Today’s celebration also celebrates Jesus’ presence with us in a new way. This new Presence of Jesus, is through the person and indwelling power of the Holy Spirit, *within us* manifested when we continue Jesus’ saving work as his disciples.

Two weeks ago Deacon Gary in his homily quoted this verse from the fourth chapter, of St. Paul’s letter to the Philippians, **“I can do all things in Christ who strengthens me”** (Ph. 4:13). This is today’s message of consolation and missionary challenge. Through the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and continually through the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, the risen and ascended Jesus continues to come, dwell and act in us.

Jesus knew that his saving mission could not be continued by mere human; on our own authority and power we cannot give true witness to Jesus’ continued Presence. Jesus knew that his mission could be entrusted to his disciples because they “will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon” them (*first reading*). It is the Holy Spirit who allays doubt, clears up misunderstanding about the mission, and gives wisdom, revelation and knowledge—all that we need to fulfill our calling. Being a disciple of Jesus is not something we do alone.

All of us have been given the “Great Commission” by Jesus to witness, baptize and teach all nations. We can accept the “Great Commission” because in the Holy Spirit we

are empowered to “do all things in Christ who strengthens” us; confident in Jesus’ assurance that “I am with you always until the end of the age” (Mt. 28:20).

As we celebrate the Ascension of Jesus and the on-going call to bear witness to him, I have invited a couple of our young adults to share with us how they have come to know and follow Jesus’ call in their lives as disciples today.