

**Bishop Jodoin's Homely for the  
Feast of the Ascension – May 24th, 2020  
In the Saint-Pierre-au-Liens church in Caraquet**  
*(Broadcasted on the radio at 94,1 fm CKLE CJVA  
and Live on the Diocese of Bathurst Facebook page)*

Today we celebrate the Feast of the Ascension, a very important feast for the whole Church and a source of great joy for all of us. Christ ascended to heaven, but heaven is not a specific place. To be in heaven is to be in total communion with God. As Pope St. Albert the Great said: *"Man God, Christ entered the heaven of the Trinity, that is to say into the Trinity itself"* with the Father and the Holy Spirit. While being in perfect communion with his Father, Christ is more than ever the Emmanuel, God among us! He is no longer physically present in the flesh with his apostles in a specific place, Palestine. It is even better. He is now present in each of us and all over the world, and has been for 2000 years. As a loved one is present in the heart of one who loves, *"We are in Him and He is in us"*. Not just for a few days, but for *"every day until the end of the world"*. This is what we are celebrating this morning. This is our joy.

As St. Paul proclaims in the second reading, Christ is the head of his Church and very present among us, members of the Church. He is present when someone speaks his words: *"Whoever listens to you listens to me"*. (Lk 10,16). He is present through our fraternal life: *"What you do to the least of my brothers, you did it to me"*. (Mt 25,40) He is present still, through the sacraments: *"This is my body and my blood ... I forgive you your sins"*. And finally, He is also present in prayer: *"Where two or three come together in my name. I am there among them."* (Mt 18,19) That's a lot of Christ's presence.

Before leaving them physically, Christ gave three important counsels to his apostles: *"First, Go! Make disciples of all nations. Second, baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and third, teach them to keep everything that I have commanded you."* What a mission entrusted to them by Christ! The apostles were quite distraught. There were only 11 of them left, with no means, and moreover, Christ was leaving!

But the Lord reassured them. He said to them, "Do not be afraid. Not only will I be with you every day until the end of the world, but as promised, you will be baptized in the Holy Spirit." St Paul reminds the small community of Ephesus that Christ has kept his word. He has sent us this Spirit which opens the eyes of

our heart, a spirit which is a strength, an energy, a force. It is the same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead. It is an incomparable power that is within us. And after 2000 years, we realize all that 11 apostles were able to accomplish marvels thanks to this force of God.

Often people tell me that they feel incompetent to succeed in the mission that Christ entrusted to us. Each time, I answer them: *"Well, no! You too have received what the apostles received. Like them, you were baptized in the Holy Spirit promised by Christ. Like them, you have within you this strength, this energy, this force to carry out this mission among members of your families, or your work or leisure places. We really have everything we need. And you know, the first evangelizers of children... they are the parents, the grandparents, way before Pope Francis, a bishop, a parish priest or religious men and women. You are in the best position, and the most competent to evangelize your loved ones. And the Lord trusts you."*

The secret to achieving this is simply to realize that it is Christ himself who evangelizes through us; by his presence within us and by the Holy Spirit He has given us. It is not so much ourselves, but He who acts! This is why, to evangelize well, to become a good witness of Christ, we must become transparent and let Christ shine through us. So that through our words and actions, those around us see the words and actions of Christ within us. They should be told: *"Do not look at me, rather look at the one who is within me and who does you good: the one who loves you, who understands you, who forgives you, who values you, who encourages you, who strengthens you!"* Then they will be able to touch the divine which is within us. This is how the greatest saints acted. They became transparent and let Christ offer warmth, and illuminate the lives of those who needed it most, who thirsted for his presence, for love, for peace, for justice, for real happiness. And by baptizing those who want to become disciples of Christ, the Church does not only pour a little water on their heads, the Church immerses them, immerses them in the very life of God!

Surely there are people around you who seek true happiness and who desire to be transformed by the love of God. The Lord is counting on you to be able to touch them deeply and to transform them intimately. Because the love and the light that Christ gives us should not be precious and jealously guarded within us, as in a safe, but, on the contrary should be shared generously. This is why we must become ever more transparent as witnesses, so as to let this love and this light of God emerge. One day, a journalist asked Pope Benedict XVI this

question: *"How many paths are there to God?"* He replied, *"As many as there are human beings."* And it's true. We can all become this path for someone who seeks God!

On this beautiful Feast of the Ascension, let us give thanks to Christ for being truly the Emmanuel, this God who is always present, in our world and in each of our lives. May the strength, the incomparable energy and the force that is the Holy Spirit help us to accomplish our mission by becoming more and more invisible as to let God become visible in the eyes of all those who feel the need to meet the divine. Amen