

Words to Ponder: *Messages*

Readings for May 20, from *the Word among us...*
Ascension Sunday: Acts 1:1-11, 20-26; Ps. 47; Eph. 1:17-23; Mk. 16:15-20

5.19.12: Our Lady of Guadalupe, Brownsville, TX... Father Francisco Acosta [audio recording]

“The one who descended is the one who ascended. *El que bajó es el que subió.* The ascension of the Lord! This is one of the most beautiful things about our Lord, Jesus Christ. The ascension of the Lord... means we’re going to look into heaven.

“Look up and look down because Jesus came from heaven, but his goal was not to remain in heaven but to [go] back to heaven and be seated at the right hand of the Father.

“What [does it mean] to be seated at the right hand of the Father?

“When Jesus descended from heaven and was born in Bethlehem, he looked like any other human being. He was enjoying being in the manger, to give glory. But now, after his resurrection, the one who descended—like the second reading says—the one who descended [was] incarnated to be one of us, to be a human being like us—as St. Paul says to the Philippians—to humble himself, to come among us as a man.

“Because [Jesus] so willingly went to the cross, the Lord, God, the Father, raised him up from the dead and gave him the resurrection. [God proclaimed] that Jesus is Lord, and the Lord is God.

“Jesus had no other choice but to [go] back to heaven where he belonged. He belonged to heaven. *Jesucristo no tenía otra opción que regresar al cielo porque el pertenece al cielo. Él es celestial.* He was taken up to heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

“He... took back his divinity. He’s now sitting at the right hand of the Father; [so] he’s equal to God, the Father, and equal to God, the Holy Spirit. Remember that we have only one God in three divine persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Jesus went back to heaven to be seated at the right hand of the Father, [so] he is equal to the Father.

“We came [down] from heaven. We are from heaven. Each one of us can say, ‘I belong to heaven. I don’t belong to this world. I was made with love by God’s hands. God shares with me his life, his grace, his glory.’ Not a god. We will never be like god, but we are sons and daughters of God.

“We are the church... that is the body of Jesus Christ. We belong to the kingdom of God. We belong to heaven. *Nosotros somos del cielo. Somos espíritus encarnados.* We belong to heaven, [but] nobody’s talking about heaven anymore. Everybody wants to be happy and to be comfortable in this life. Everybody wants to make this life like they decide everything. There’s nothing more. This is one of our biggest mistakes.

“It’s good to be happy, but don’t expect that this world is heaven.

“Come on. Be real. This world is about the valley of tears, as King Solomon says. This is not heaven. Open your eyes. Open your mind. Don’t be confused. Don’t let people lie to you. You can be happy all the ways that you want, but this will never be heaven. You can be happy but never have joy in this world because this world is not heaven. We have to [go] back to heaven. We cannot make our tent, our home, in this life. This life is a like a colony. It’s a pilgrimage.

“We don’t belong here. Please open your mind about this because otherwise you may be fighting and fighting all the time to be happy to establish your life on this earth and to find happiness. And, yes, you can be happy but never have joy. The joy of heaven is only in heaven. *El gozo del cielo está solamente en el cielo. No hay temor.*

“But I’m not saying everything. This world is like an appetizer. You know what an appetizer is? When you [eat], you want to have good food. To [whet] your appetite, people offer you something [before the main course].

“Then they say, ‘You want [to sample] what I’m cooking? You want to taste my food?’

“You say, ‘Yes. I want to eat everything you have because I’m hungry.’

“But it’s just an appetizer. This world is the beginning for heaven. It’s not heaven. We can eat. We can taste heaven. *Éste mundo no es el cielo, pero depende de nosotros que sea un aperitivo del cielo, un principio del cielo, algo que nos de idea de cómo es el cielo.*

“The only way to find out is in church. This appetizer, my friends, there is no way you can find this appetizer of heaven out there. Out there people are killing each other. People are lying to each other. Out there people are abusing each other. This life is like a jungle where people destroy each other.

“I am going to be daring. No, I need to be realistic. Just open the newspaper. Listen to the news in the morning. See the lies. See what people are needing today. What is the attitude of people? You will find that people are not happy. They can do whatever they want, but they’re not happy people. They’re very dissatisfied with everything. Nothing is good for them. Nothing is complete for them. They’re searching and searching and searching; but, until they find God, they can search all they want. If you don’t have God, you’re wasting your time.

“In church, in the sacraments—baptism, confirmation, Eucharist, the confession of our sins—when we touch [God], we have the gift. Touching him.

“When you go out of this church when Mass is finished, you will be equipped, nourished, prepared to face the trials of life, the temptations of life.

“What more can I say? Is this heaven? Yes. An appetizer. Is this hell? You’d better believe it. This can be heaven, or this can be hell. It’s up to us. It’s up to what we want.

“God created the world for us. God gave us the sacraments. God gave us life, faith, understanding, wisdom, knowledge, piety. This is heaven. If we don’t nourish that, if we don’t work with that, our lives will be a complete hell. And it’s very sad to say that there are people who live in constant hell because they don’t have God in their lives.

“We come to church. You know why we come to church? *¿Ustedes saben para que venimos a la iglesia?* Because we must co-exist with people who are in hell, and we cannot be in hell because of them. We need to keep our soul touching [God], not to be like the others, not to destroy our lives.

“If they want to make their lives hell, let them be; but [we don’t] necessarily need to live in hell. There is a choice for us. Looking to heaven means that, instead of looking at the floor, [we look] up to heaven where God is. Heaven is here in church right now, in this Eucharist, in this community....

“Please, don’t lose the way. There is only one heaven, not two heavens. Try to be together until we reach our dream.... Heaven is not an impossible dream. Nothing is impossible with [God].”

Yes, Jesus! Thank you for calling me into your service! (the Word among us, April 6-May 31, 2012, p. 64).