

On the Ascension

Acts is the story of the Body of Christ taking shape in the world. We see its birth and tentative first steps, its stumbles and recoveries. This chronicle of the missionary Church begins with an essential element of the story, known as the Ascension. The Risen Christ gives his disciples a final blessing and is then “taken up.”

“They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ‘Men of Galilee,’ they said, ‘why do you stand here looking into the sky?’”

A great transformation is at hand. Pentecost is ten days away. But that great outpouring of the Holy Spirit cannot happen unless Jesus leaves the scene.

On this point, Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis, a Trappist monk and biblical scholar, writes the following in his book, *The Way of the Disciple: [By the Ascension]*, Jesus now ceases to be but one person in one physical body among many in the world so that the Church corporately and in every individual member can become the presence of his Body on earth. Jesus disappears as a single individual in order to fill the whole world with his presence. From now on, those who want to see Jesus, the Messiah, will have to look to the Church and her members – for better or for worse. What an awesome privilege and responsibility!”

Grace and peace, fellow members of the Body of Christ,

Fr. Dion