**The Eucharist: Ascension is our Hope**

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The reality of hope as we know it today, may not have been that clear to the apostles as they witnessed the ascension of the Lord. They were thinking more of the realization of the Kingdom of God rather than the ascension.

* “When they had gathered together they asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”
* Jesus did not give a direct answer to that question, but He rather challenged them on what is more important – that is the kingdom. As followers of Christ, we are to focus on witnessing to the kingdom. We are called to share in this kingdom and to help others come to share in it as well.
* Jesus gave them all that they need to make them focus. The Eucharist is that meal that gives strength for the journey. The sacraments help our minds to focus on heaven where Our Jesus Christ sits at the right hand of God and expects us to be one day.
* Jesus ascended to heaven not to leave us alone on the journey to the kingdom, but to help us as we preach the kingdom of God to people on earth.
* Ascension is about looking up to heaven where Christ who is our hope and joy is.

1st Reading: Acts 11:1-11; the writer started by addressing the book to Theophilus. Who was the writer and who is this person Theophilus?

* “In the first book, Theophilus, I dealt with all that Jesus did and taught until the day he was taken up, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen.”
* Luke was more concern about the urgency of evangelization not only to the Jews but to the whole world. He himself was not a Jew but a Gentile who was knowledgeable and educated. He put his resources and wealth of knowledge to serve the Lord and the people of God.
* He is said to be the author of the third Gospel. In it, he told the stories of the encounter of Jesus with other tribes who are not Jewish people more than any of the Gospel writers.
* He is more concerned about salvation for all, the mercy of God, the love of God for the poor, radical followership of Jesus that completely let go of worldly things, the importance of the Holy Spirit and being joyful in the Lord.
* The person of Theophilus could be a man of authority that needed to be convinced about the person of Jesus, or a wealthy individual in the society whose salvation Luke was more concerned about or as the name stands for Theo and Philus meaning “Loved (of or by) God”.
* We are all children of God that He is concern about our salvation. We need to know the story of salvation so that we can be part of the saving people of God. It is this love of God for humanity. We are commissioned to preach to the whole world.
* “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Gospel: Matthew 28:16-20; is the commissioning of the disciples by Jesus. This is the power to rejoice at the ascension and also pass the joy to others.

* “All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”
* Ascension is about meeting the Christ who dwells within and also taking the same Christ into the world where we live.
* We are called to look forward and pass the message of hope to the world. The urgency of the message is emphasized because the world needs to be transformed by the word of God.

2nd Reading: Ephesians 1:17-23; the best I think I can say about this passage is a resounding “**Amen**” to the powerful prayers expressed by St Paul to the Ephesians.

* “Brothers and sisters: May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give you a Spirit of wisdom and revelation resulting in knowledge of Him. May the eyes of your hearts be enlightened, that you may know what is the hope that belongs to His call, what are the riches of glory in His inheritance among the holy ones, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power for us who believe, in accord with the exercise of His great might, which He worked in Christ, raising Him from the dead and seating Him at His right hand in the heavens, far above every principality, authority, power, and dominion, and every name that is named not only in this age but also in the one to come. And He put all things beneath His feet and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of the one who fills all things in every way.”
* Amen.