

## GROWTH AND CREATIVITY

### Ascension of Our Lord

The Gospel narratives give us several cues to understand how the first Christian communities began to live and grow after Jesus had parted from them. Probably, it wasn't as simple as we might often imagine. How did they relate to Him, after he had left this earth?

Matthew, for instance, doesn't even use the word "ascension" into heaven. He finished his gospel with a farewell scene on a mountain of Galilee, during which Jesus makes a solemn promise to his disciples: "*Know that I will be with you all the days until the end of the world.*" His disciples should not feel that Jesus had left them: he would remain with them forever, but, how?

Luke, however, presents a different vision. In the last scene of his gospel, Jesus "*withdrew from them and was carried up to heaven.*" The disciples had to accept in all its reality the separation: Jesus is already past of God's own mystery. But he went back to the Father "*and he blessed them.*" His followers began their own pilgrimage blessed and inspired by the power of Jesus, the one who cured the sick, forgave sinners and entertained children.

The evangelist John puts in Jesus' mouth words that give us yet another clue. Bidding goodbye to his disciples, Jesus tells them: "*I'm going to the Father and you are sad...But I must go back so that you may receive the Holy Spirit.*" The disciples' sadness is easy to understand. They want the security that Jesus' presence had given them everywhere they went and now feel the temptation of going on living like a child under the protection of its master.

Jesus' answer shows a wise pedagogy. His absence will help his followers grow in maturity. Still He leaves them with his Spirit. And it is this Holy Spirit that will, in his absence, help them grow to be responsible adults. This is something all of us should remember at a time when we are experiencing some kind of reluctance to be creative, and we fall into the temptation of *doing nothing* or the nostalgia of a Christianity that was meant for other times and cultures.

Christians have lapsed more than once, all along history, into the temptation to live our following of Christ in a childlike manner. This feast day of the Ascension should help us to remember that, after Jesus ascended into heaven, we have been living the era of the Spirit, which should be a time for more creativity and responsibility. The Spirit can provide all the followers of Jesus with some "eternal recipes". He will give us light and courage to go on finding new ways to reproduce today Jesus' life and miracles. And that is the only Way to reveal Jesus' Truth and Light.

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Gospel Network THE GOOD NEWS

Reveal the creativity of the Spirit

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Luke 24, 46-53