

Ascension C.19; Acts 1:1-11; Heb 9:24-10:23; Luke 24:46-53; *What's new?*

Comedian Henny Youngman tells about the time he was thrown out of an antique shop. "**All I did,**" he said, "**was walk in and ask, 'What's new?'"**

But there is *something new* in the lives of all disciples today, Jesus is leaving them and we hear, "**When he had said this, as they were looking on,**

... he was lifted up and a cloud took him from their sight."

Like those first disciples we have seen these past few weeks many "good byes" in the form of graduations and a *moving-on* to new places and experiences.

One student was asked this about her graduation.

At the end of school what do you want to do? - *I want to get my diploma.*

After your diploma what do you want to do? - *I want to go to college.*

After college what do you want to do? - *I want to get a job.*

Then what do you want to do? - *I want to make big money.*

What do you want to do after making money? - *I want to build a big house.*

After that what do you intend to do? - *I want to get married.*

What will you do after getting married? - *I will have a family.*

What will you do after having a family? - *I will retire.*

What do you want to do after you retire? - *I want to take a rest.*

What will you do after taking a rest? - *I don't know.*

Will you die? - *Oh yes, I will die, too.* (Source unk)

Sometimes we are so busy doing things, achieving, making progress that we can forget *what life is actually all about*, which is preparing to meet God. The *Ascension* of Jesus reminds us that during our lives we are "only passing through" this earth. **We are pilgrims on a journey.** Jesus' earthly life was temporary and he ascended **to sit at the right hand of the Father.** Likewise, our lives here are temporary. They will come to an end and we will meet God in the next life.

But, remember the conversation with that student.

The student had an answer for everything but never even thought about dying and what would happen next. Jesus tells his first disciples, "**You are witnesses of these things. And behold I am sending the promise of my Father upon you**

....you will be clothed with power from on high."

The end of one mission is the beginning of another mission.

This is the climatic event of the Incarnation in the Gospel according to Luke.

In the risen Christ, humanity has taken its place at God's side, and the Father has placed every power in heaven and on earth under Christ's feet. The Ascension

connects and provides *continuity* to the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus with the ministry about to unfold. It provides *continuity* between the ministry of Jesus and the ministry of witness to which the disciples are invited to undertake **2** then *and we are invited to on this Day*. Jesus came and lived among us. He fulfilled his mission of teaching, healing, forgiving, suffering, sacrificing and loving. **He did what needed to be done. Now it was time to go.**

*On the mountainside Jesus entrusts to his followers – *his Gospel of healing, compassion, reconciliation, and hope*. Having given *his* life to revealing God's love for all humanity, he entrusts that work to us and to every disciple of every time and place. He commissions us to be *his* witnesses continuing *his* work with all its risks, despite all our doubts. To build the Kingdom requires from us humility, respect, patience; *the Risen One's* trust compels us to let go of our own interests in order to open our hearts to change and the costs of such change. *(Daily Reflections, Easter 2019)

God has great plans for us that are out of this world!

Just as that power of God worked through Mary at Christ's incarnation, so now it works through the disciples as *they/we* continue his mission. Their mission is now ours, and Jesus is ready to share the same power with us. Any who commit their lives to Jesus' saving mission can trust that their efforts will be supported

... with a strength even death cannot conquer.

Do you recall: a **Francis of Assisi** who arose out of the moral chaos of the 12th century to "rebuild" the church of Jesus through Gospel values.

A **Maximilian Kolbe** who stepped forward defying Nazi madness to die as a martyr in order to save a young man for his family.

A weary **Rosa Parks** who said no to racial prejudice and refused to move to the back of the bus, thus helping to launch the Civil Rights Movement.

A **Mother Teresa** who refused to allow an untouchable man die on the streets of Calcutta and restored his dignity as a human being before he died.

A **Nelson Mandela** who rejected apartheid and went to prison for 27 years, then when freed sought reconciliation and not a blood bath for a new South Africa.

A **Jackie Robinson, No. 42**, who bravely opened the doors of Baseball,

... inspiring others to challenge prejudice everywhere.

Empowered by the Spirit disciples make a difference and not just those BIG NAMES, but you and me. Jesus still seeks such witnesses. (Once Upon A Gospel, W. Bausch, p. 142)
What will you do next? I found a little poem that goes like this:

*I am my neighbor's Bible; he reads me when we meet.
Today he reads me in my house, tomorrow in the street.
He may a relative, or friend, or slight acquaintance be;
He may not even know my name, yet he is reading me.* (F. McCarthy, *New Sunday Liturgies*, Ascension C)

It has been said that of one hundred people, one will read the Bible, and ninety-nine will read *the Christian*. **What's new in your life?**

At this Easter Liturgy of the Ascension, the angels still call out to us,

“Why are you standing there looking at the sky?” Let's get busy