

The Ascension of The Lord

We have a unique perspective during this pandemic into what the Apostles must have felt about Jesus leaving them to return to the Father. He promised not to abandon them and foretold the imminent coming of the Holy Spirit but then departed before their eyes. He reminded them that if He did not go, the Paraclete would not come. Somehow in God's eternal plan, the Third Person of the Trinity would be sent only upon the return of the Son to the Father.

Imagine both the joy and the sorrow in the hearts of His disciples at His departure. How could they not, even in the midst of the recent Easter miracle feel this separation now. Like them, we too having been separated from our Eucharistic Lord feel a longing and perhaps even some sorrow. Without being present physically at Mass there is an emptiness in our hearts. Even Priests feel this in offering the Mass without the people present. Someone recently said to me that although before this pandemic he had not practiced his faith for many years, he felt the distance from God and vowed to return to Mass as soon as the suspension was lifted. His words reminded me of the old expression; "absence makes the heart grow fonder."

I'm grateful for the decision of our Bishop to allow the churches in our diocese to remain open during this difficult period. Here at OLV the church doors open at 6:00am and people can come and go throughout the day to visit our Lord in His Eucharistic Presence. Many have noticed the new votive candle stands that arrived last week. They are in the church to offer the opportunity for people to express their devotion to the saints and pray for loved ones both living and deceased. St. Francis and St. John Paul II statues will be added to the church soon. The families who gifted the votive candle stands and the new statues understand our need for the help of the saints and their constant care of us from heaven. When you find yourself passing the church, park your car, and come in to make a visit. Spend a few moments sitting and listening to Jesus. You will feel His love and experience the presence of the Holy Spirit whom He sent to remain with us. If you need to go to confession, call the parish office and leave me a message. I will return your call and schedule a convenient time for you to come and make your confession in a way that respects social distancing norms. Even though I have only been here for a little over four months now, I miss you. Please know that I pray for all of you every day.

Peace,

Fr. Robert