

**Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord – Cycle B**  
**Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception – May 13, 2018**  
**Reverend Robert W. Marshall, Jr., Pastor**

Buying a Mothers' Day present isn't easy for my brother and me. Don't get me wrong. We love our mother and we are anxious to show it. We'd be delighted to buy her something she needed – but there really isn't anything that she absolutely needs. And buying her something that she wants – well, there's the problem. You see she has moved into assisted living and we are still struggling to clear away the house my parents owned since 1961. In order to fit anything else in the assisted living apartment, or the house, or the attic, or the carport or either of the two storage building in the backyard, for that matter, we'd have to clear out a space by throwing stuff away. And who has the energy for that? Every time we try to clean up, you see, we encounter some piece of childhood artwork or broken toy, a remnant of shag carpeting or a model train engine under repair. With all of these, with each old suit or hat or necktie or Christmas ornament or Easter basket, with all of it there is a memory or two or ten. It is the stuff – it is the memories – it is the love – that transforms a house into a home. A house is where you seek shelter from the weather, a home is where you belong.

On this Mother's Day weekend, when so many of our thoughts are on our own homes – and on our mothers and grandmothers and many others who have made our homes so special – on this Ascension day, we celebrate that Jesus is home. The eternally-begotten Son of God has gone to be with his Father in Heaven. Yes, our Savior has gone before us – to live among the familiar, to dwell not with memories, but with those whom we remember, with those who have gone before us. It is their presence we are invited to feel in each celebration of the Eucharist, when heaven and earth unite and we are offered the Bread of Angels, the Cup of Salvation. Jesus has chosen to live where Love is most real, where God who is love is seen face-to-face, by angels, yes, but by saints as well. Not just by the saints we can identify, but by those countless millions – our own family and friends included – who are known only to God. What is more, Jesus dwells there in a way that saints only hope for. Yes, the Spirit of Jesus, the soul of Jesus is in heaven, but his body, his flesh and blood – the same body and blood we share in the Eucharist – Jesus' body is in heaven as well. When we celebrate the Ascension of the Lord, we celebrate the fact that Jesus has brought humanity – his human nature and ours as well – home to the Father, home to our Creator. Hopefully, that is why we are here – because we feel at home with God and with all of God's people in this Eucharist and we want to draw ever closer to him, to them. One day, we too want to be home with the Father as Jesus has promised us, as Jesus has

offered us. Jesus himself has opened the gates for us, has shown us the Way. To get to our heavenly home, we need only follow him, we need only listen to him.

The great gift of the Eucharist is our daily, weekly glimpse at our heavenly home. It is our family reunion – not just our parish family, but all of God’s family, and the hosts of heaven as well. United in one faith, strengthened by the world-wide Church, we gather to share Christ’s own Body and Blood and to listen to him.

But if we truly listen, sometimes we will hear things that we would rather not. In our gospel today, Jesus wants to assure us of his continued presence among us. He invites us to feel at home, but if we listened, then we know that Jesus does not want us to spend our time focused exclusively on heaven. He does not want us to live out our days gazing in the skies. No, Jesus sent his disciples, sends each of us, on a mission. We – each of us – are called to proclaim the gospel, the good news, and to bring others into God’s family. We are called to make disciples of all nations – the ones we want to spend eternity with and those we would just as soon not see again. We are invited to dwell not just with our stuff, with the memorable treasures of our lives, but with the stuff, the junk, of the lives of others. We are called to accept others as they are – with whatever baggage they come with – and to bring them to Christ. Those we evangelize will be invited to let go of the burdens and cares that load them down, but we are called to do that as well. Evangelization means a continual spring cleaning of our own lives so that we might help ourselves and others focus on Christ.

Yes, the Solemnity of the Ascension reminds us that heaven is our true home; it is where we are one day called to be – body and soul – with our loving Creator. But this feast should also serve to remind us that we are not yet home. We must continuously listen to the Word of God. We must continually draw strength from his Body and Blood, and go forth to make disciples of all nations. We must still journey – together – toward heaven. We must travel light and actively invite others to join us on our path. We remain a pilgrim people – aware that our home is in heaven, but firmly committed to our journey of faith here. Go, therefore, and make disciples.