

Persons in the unity of the indivisible Godhead. He is also the Substantial Bond of Charity which unites all the members of the Church with one another and with Our Blessed Lord, that "...they may all be one," as Christ and the Father are one. (John 17:11) Holy Mother Church rejoices at the Ascension because she knows that Our Divine Savior goes to complete the work of the Incarnation, to send down the Holy Ghost, Who will abide with her forever, Who will lead her in the way of all truth, and Who will, by the outpouring of His seven-fold Gifts, maintain her in the bond of perfect charity.

The second reason for consolation which the Apostles found and which we find in Our Lord's Ascension is contained in the words of Our Lord in St. John: "I will not leave you orphans, I will come to you." (14:18) When the Prophet Baruch, in the Old Testament, foresaw in a vision the mystery of the Incarnation, he knew that this mystery was one which would remain forever. In his prophecy he proclaims: "Be of good comfort, my children.... For my hope is in the Eternal that He will save you: and joy is come upon [us] from the Holy One, because of the mercy which shall come to you from our everlasting Savior. For I sent you forth with mourning and weeping: but the Lord will bring you back to me with joy and gladness forever." (Bar. 4:1-23) Thus, the eternal World of God, having once come among men, will abide with them forever.

But how does Our Divine Savior accomplish this and reconcile the apparent contradictions of His Ascension to the right hand of the heavenly Father with His continual abiding among men, conversing with them forever and not leaving us orphans? This is accomplished by the Institution of the Holy Eucharist. Without leaving His throne in heaven, our Divine Lord consoles us today and every day by His abiding presence among us in the tabernacle. For He, Who came to lead earth back to heaven, would first bring heaven down to earth. In this way does Infinite Wisdom solve the problem, which Infinite Love has proposed, of not leaving us orphans and yet ascending to His heavenly Father.

A third consolation in Our Lord's departure is found in St. John's Gospel: "Let not your heart be troubled.... In My Father's house there are many mansions.... And if I shall go, and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and will take you to myself; that

where I am, you also may be." (John 14:1-3) A well-sure-founded hope that one day, by His grace and our complying with it we will ascend like Him to the place where He is, and will participate in the glory which He enjoys—this is what makes the feast of the Ascension so joyful. In this life, where perfect happiness is unattainable, our main happiness necessarily consists in the hope of obtaining that perfect happiness which is found in heaven alone. No other feast day encourages this hope more than the Ascension. Our Lord Himself has told us that if he should go to prepare that place for each and every one of us in the bliss of paradise, that He will return for us and take us to that place He has prepared. What greater motive for hope do we have than this? Right now, Our Lord sits at the right hand of the Father, waiting to lead us to the place prepared for us in heaven.

Our Lord's Resurrection is the foundation of our Faith, for by raising His body up on the third day, He gave an irrefutable proof of His Divinity. The approaching feast of Pentecost is the source and fountain of all charity because of the outpouring of the Spirit of Charity on the Church. The feast of the Ascension of Our Divine Lord into heaven is the firm grounds for our unwavering hope. If it were not for this hope as we travail through this valley of tears, we should be most miserable. We have, of our own free will, joyfully embraced poverty, suffering, persecution, and contumely, which are the portion of all God's elect. For what reason? For the blessed hope of the glory to come. What is the guarantee of this hope? The mystery of the Ascension—the Ascension of Him Who, having endured the Cross, now mounts His throne in heaven to wear the eternal crown of glory and to prepare crowns for all His faithful followers.

Though this hope is the common inheritance of all the children of God, how few there are who build their hope on a secure foundation by following the example of the Sacred Heart! How many there are who look for consolation from the elements of this world, forgetting that the fashion of this world passes away! We rejoice at the Ascension because we have the sure and solid ground of true Hope, which is through Him, in Him, and with Him, Who has ascended into heaven, "...to prepare a place for us, that where He is, we also may be." (John 14:2)