

Homily
May 29, 2022
The Ascension of the Lord
22:27-30:56

Tis the season of endings and beginnings: graduation. How many here have been to a graduation this year? Raise your hand. Ben, I know you've been to a graduation because you graduated. Thank you.

Graduations are commencements. They are beginnings. That's why they're called "commencement." It's the beginning of the next step or stage in one's life. Whether it's eighth grade, high school, college, graduate school – and hard to believe, even kindergarten. (I still haven't gotten that one clear in my head.)

But there's the ending that comes before. Where you were and what you were doing is ending and you're stepping out into this new beginning.

The question becomes what do you do in-between? Because you see, this beginning is going to -in a few weeks - be a true new beginning. A new place, a new set of teachers, circumstances or employment. What will you do in-between?

(Pointing out Antonia...) She just graduated with a Master's in forensic science? – More or less: *biological forensic science*. So...probably you're not going to be a mortician...a coroner. She's too pretty to be a coroner.

Today in the Acts of the Apostles and the Gospel According to Luke, we witness endings and beginnings. (Microphone messes up. Deacon Tom, "Old batteries and new." – applause...You are so helpful. I hope this homily comes to an end at some point. It's just dragging on. All right. Here we go. Pocket.)

Luke writes to Theophilus in our First Reading and he says, "In the First Book, Theophilus..." First Book. Oh, yeah. That's right. The Gospel According to Luke is the first book. Acts of the Apostles is his second book. Luke is the most prolific writer in all of the New Testament. His number of words and verses far exceeds that of Paul. Hard to imagine.

We hear from Luke today two versions of endings and beginnings.

In the Acts of the Apostles, there's this 40-day period between the Resurrection and what we're celebrating today, the Ascension. And in that time, Jesus continues to instruct and to lead and to bring to the point where they are almost ready to go on mission.

So today's celebration is the ending of that period, but it's also the beginning of another period of preparation; being ready for the coming of the Spirit. And after Jesus commissions them, what we heard is that he wants them to stay in Jerusalem and wait there. But what are they to do? In the Gospel we hear they spend time in the Temple. In the Acts of the Apostles in later verses, we hear that they spend time together not only in Temple, but in a room where they gather, probably to pray and to wonder what's next.

Jesus gives them these moments. And the Gospel writer recalls these moments between.

We're standing right now at an ending and yet, a beginning. We've ended 40 days, plus 3 of the Easter Season. There are seven more. What shall we do with them? Having celebrated our future in heaven.

What shall we do with this time, this next week? As we await the celebration of the Spirit, recalling how the Spirit has come upon us in Baptism and Confirmation and continues to flood into us. What shall we do as we wait to celebrate that in the reality of the Church, which we are?

You know, we like to move from thing to thing pretty quickly, don't we? And since computers came into our lives, we dart about like sparks through stubble, don't we? Just one thing after another, after another, with very little time in between – for reflection, for taking something in and deciding, if it is worth the time I just spent, or did I just waste time? Or did it impart knowledge or understanding, or just distraction. We do it constantly.

So the Lord invites us today – take the time – these next seven days. What does the Ascension mean to you? What does Pentecost mean to you? Things are ending and they're beginning. What shall we do with the time in-between?