

7th Sunday of Easter- C
Ascension of the Lord
Gaizel Arguelles Adan

Lectionary 58:

Acts 1:1-11

Psalm 47:2-3, 6-7, 8-9

Ephesians 1:17-23 or

Hebrews 9:24-28; 10:19-23

Luke 24:46-53

<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/060125-Ascension.cfm>

Possible preaching themes:

- The ascension of Jesus signifies the completion of his mission on earth and the shift to the mission of the emerging Church.
- Before ascending, Jesus assured his disciples of his ongoing presence by promising to send the Holy Spirit.
- The ascension of Jesus inspires us to hope and believe that one day we will share a life with God in heaven.

Possible scientific resources:

- [Life Cycle of Salmon](#). The life cycle of salmon is a process of migration, adaptation, and survival. Their transition from the ocean back to freshwater facilitates the completion of their life cycle as they give birth to a new generation of salmon. Similarly, Jesus also went through being born, ministering, suffering, dying, and resurrecting. His ascension reflects the completion of his mission on earth and the shift to the mission of the emerging Church.
- [Robots Performing Complicated Tasks](#). AI-powered robots can learn to perform complicated and unpredictable tasks to assist humans. The robots execute tasks, receive feedback from cameras, learn from their mistakes, and master the skills. The disciples were collaborators of Jesus in doing his mission on earth. Before ascending, he blessed them and entrusted to them the mission as his witnesses.
- [Robots as Nurses](#). This research outlines the pros and cons of having nurse robots deployed to care for the elderly. Before ascending, Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to the disciples to guide and assist them in doing the sacred mission he left them. It was a promise of constant presence and empowerment.

- [Dogs Respond to Human Absence](#). Studies indicate that dogs respond to the absence of their owners. When their owners are not around, they tend to experience increased levels of stress, heightened heart rate, and vocalizations; also there is evidence that [dogs secrete tears when they reunite with their owners](#) affirming the deep bond between dogs and humans developed through domestication. Like the relationship between humans and dogs, Jesus understood how the disciples would feel about him leaving them. He promised the disciples to receive the Holy Spirit as a reassurance of his ongoing presence and they returned to Jerusalem with great joy.
- [Natal Homing in Sea Turtles and Salmon](#). This research revealed that salmon and sea turtles imprint on the magnetic field of their natal area and use this information to navigate their way back to it after spending some time in the ocean. Jesus' ascension reminds us that our life does not end here on earth and that someday we will join God in heaven—our home. Such is possible because of the ascension of Jesus.

Homily outline:

- **Scientific explanation**
 - Salmon are anadromous which means they return to freshwater to spawn after living in the ocean. Their life cycle is a process of migration, adaptation, and survival.
 - To equip them for a life in the ocean, they become silvery in color and learn to swim with the current. When they are ready, they migrate to the ocean.
 - After reaching a certain level of maturity in the ocean, they will go back to freshwater where they originated to spawn. They possess a 'homing instinct' that enables them to locate where they were born.
 - Salmon face many challenges when they travel back to freshwater. They must survive natural and human obstacles.
 - Their determination to return to their natal area is remarkable. They overcome all the challenges to successfully lay eggs and give birth to a new generation of salmon.
- **The Ascension of Jesus**
 - The Gospel begins with Jesus reminding the disciples about the fulfillment of his passion, death, and resurrection as written in the scriptures.
 - Jesus then stresses that the disciples have witnessed those key moments in his life. He says, "You are witnesses of these things."

- He remarks that a promise is to be fulfilled, "And behold I am sending the promise of my Father upon you." To fulfill the promise, he has to ascend into heaven and return to the Father.
- His ascension denotes a spatial departure from earth to heaven. It signifies the completion of his mission on earth and the beginning of the greater mission of the Church through his disciples.
- Pope Francis, in his message for [World Mission Day 2022](#), emphasized the key role of the disciples as witnesses—bearing witness to Christ—through the assistance of the Spirit.

"The disciples are to be witnesses of Jesus, thanks to the grace of the Holy Spirit that they will receive. Wherever they go and in whatever place they find themselves."

- The life cycle of salmon somehow depicts the earthly life of Jesus leading to his ascension. Jesus had to go through the process of incarnation, passion, death, resurrection, and ascension.
- He knew that his earthly life had to end at some point. Similar to the journey of salmon back to their original home, Jesus had to return to the Father to send the Holy Spirit and initiate the mission of the Church.

- **Completion and Transition**

- During his public ministry, Jesus equipped the disciples to be ready for the time that they would receive the Spirit and continue his sacred mission.
- The ascension of Jesus invites us to reflect on the tasks we have been entrusted with that have come to fruition such as projects, ministries, or community assignments. While these tasks provide us with security and validation, we should be willing to let go of them as soon as our duty has reached completion. Completion requires transition, and we must embrace new beginnings. We should empower others to take over, continue the work, and grow from it. Continuing the work of the Church demands sharing it with others so that they may also bear witness to Christ.

Tags: Ascension, Church, ministry, Holy Spirit, salmon