

Jesus' Ascension into Heaven

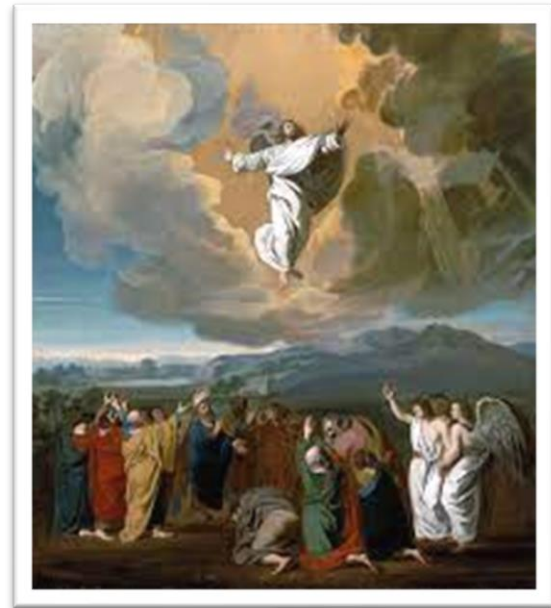
On the night before His wonderful Ascension, I saw Jesus in the inner hall of the house of the Last Supper with the Blessed Virgin and The Eleven. The disciples and the holy women were praying in the side halls. In the Supper Room the Communion Table was standing under the lighted lamp, and on it the Paschal Bread and chalice. The Apostles were in their robes of ceremony. The Blessed Virgin was opposite Jesus who, as on Maundy Thursday, was consecrating bread and wine.

I saw the Blessed Sacrament entering the mouths of the Apostles in the form of a luminous body, and Jesus' words at the consecration of the wine flowing into the chalice like a stream of red light. During the last days, Magdalen, Martha, and Mary Cleophas received the Blessed Sacrament.

Toward morning, Matins were solemnly recited as usual under the lamp, Jesus again imparted to Peter jurisdiction over the others, again laid upon him the mantle of which I have spoken, and repeated what He had said on the mountain by the Sea of Tiberias. He gave some instructions also on Baptism and the blessing of water. During Matins and the instructions, I saw seventeen of the most confidential disciples standing in the hall behind the Blessed Virgin.

Before leaving the house, Jesus presented the Blessed Virgin to the Apostles and disciples as their Mother, their Mediatrix, and their Advocate, and she bestowed upon Peter and all the rest her blessing, which they received bowing very low. At that instant I beheld Mary raised upon a throne, a sky-blue mantle around her, a crown upon her head. This was symbolical of her dignity as Queen of Mercy.

At dawn of day Jesus left the house of the Last Supper with The Eleven. The Blessed Virgin followed them closely; the disciples, at some little distance. They passed through the streets of Jerusalem where all was quiet, the inhabitants still buried in sleep. At each moment the Lord became more earnest, more rapid in speech and action. On the preceding evening He appeared to me much more sympathetic in His words to His followers. I recognized the route that they took as that of the Palm Sunday procession. I saw that Jesus went with them over all the paths trodden by Him during His



Passion, in order to inspire them by His teachings and admonitions with a lively appreciation of the fulfillment of the Promise. In every place in which some scene of His Passion had been enacted, He paused a moment to instruct them upon the accomplishment of the words of the Prophets, upon the Promises, and to explain the symbolical relation of the place to the same. On those sites which the Jews had laid waste, over which they had thrown heaps of stones, through which they had opened ditches, or which they had rendered impassable in other ways in order to prevent their being venerated, Jesus ordered the disciples in His train to go on ahead and clear away all obstructions, which they quickly did. Then bowing low as He passed, they allowed Him to take the lead again while they followed. Just before the gate that led out to Mount Calvary, they turned aside from the road to a delightful spot shaded by trees. It was one of several places of prayer that lay around Jerusalem. Jesus paused to teach and comfort the little flock. Meanwhile, day dawned brightly; their hearts grew lighter, and they even began to think that Jesus would still remain with them.

New crowds of believers arrived, but I saw no women among them. Jesus again took the road that led to Mount Calvary and the Holy Sepulcher. But He did not follow it up to those points; He turned off and went around the city to the Mount of Olives. Some of the places on these roads consecrated to prayer and sanctified by Jesus' teaching, and which had been laid waste or hedged in by the Jews, were now restored by the disciples. The tools for their work they found in the gardens on their way. I remember round shovels that looked like our bake oven shovels.

Jesus paused awhile with the crowd in an exceedingly cool and lovely spot covered with beautiful long grass, I was surprised to see that it was nowhere trodden down. The multitude that here surrounded Jesus was so great that I could no longer count them. Jesus spoke to them a very long time, like one who is about closing his discourse and coming to a conclusion. His hearers divined that the hour of parting was near, and yet they had no idea that the time still intervening was to be so short. The sun was already high, was already far above the horizon. I know not whether I express it rightly, for in that country it seems to me the sun is not so high as it is here. It always appears to me as if it were nearer to one. I do not see it as here, rising like a small globe. It shines there with far more brilliancy. Its rays are, on the whole, not so fine. They often look like a broad pathway of light, Jesus and His followers tarried here fully an hour. By this time the people in Jerusalem were all on the alert, amazed at the crowds of people they descried around Mount Olivet. Out of the city, too, crowds were pouring in bands. They consisted of all that had gone out to meet Jesus on Palm Sunday. The narrow

roads were soon thronged, though around Jesus and His own, the space was left free.

The Lord went only to Gethsemani and from the Garden of Olives up to the summit of the mount. He did not set foot upon the path on which He had been arrested. The crowd followed as in a procession, ascending by the different paths that encircled the mount. Many even pressed through the fences and garden hedges. Jesus at each instant shone more brightly and His motions became more rapid. The disciples hastened after Him, but it was impossible to overtake Him. When He reached the top of the mountain, He was resplendent as a beam of white sunlight. A shining circle, glancing in all the colors of the rainbow, fell from Heaven around Him. The pressing crowd stood in a wide circle outside, as if blending with it. Jesus Himself shone still more brightly than the glory about Him. He laid the left hand on His breast and, raising the right, turned slowly around, blessing the whole world. The crowd stood motionless. I saw all receive the benediction. Jesus did not impart it with the flat, open hand, like the rabbis, but like the Christian Bishops. With great joy I felt His blessing of the whole world.

And now the rays of light from above united with the glory emanating from Jesus, and I saw Him disappearing, dissolving as it were in the light from Heaven, vanishing as He rose. I lost sight of His head first. It appeared as if one sun was lost in another, as if one flame entered another, as if a spark floated into a flame. It was as if one were gazing into the full midday splendors of the sun, though this light was whiter and clearer. Full day compared with this would be dark. First, I lost sight of Jesus' head, then His whole person, and lastly His feet, radiant with light, disappeared in the celestial glory. I saw innumerable souls from all sides going into that light and vanishing on high with the Lord. I cannot say that I saw Him becoming apparently smaller and smaller like something flying up in the air, for He disappeared as it were in a cloud of light.

Out of that cloud, something like dew, like a shower of light fell upon all below, and when they could no longer endure the splendor, they were seized with amazement and terror. The Apostles and disciples, who were nearest to Jesus, were blinded by the dazzling glare. They were forced to lower their eyes, while many cast themselves prostrate on their faces. The Blessed Virgin was standing close behind them and gazing calmly straight ahead.

After some moments, when the splendor began to diminish, the whole assembly in deep silence—their souls swayed by varying emotions—gazed fixedly up at the brightness, which continued visible for a long time, I saw two figures appear in this light. They looked small at first, but seemed to grow larger and larger as they descended. They were clothed in long white

garments, and each held a staff in one hand. They looked like Prophets. They addressed the multitude, their voices like trumpets resounding loud and clear. It seemed to me that they could surely be heard in Jerusalem. They made no motion, stood perfectly still, and said: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking up to Heaven? This Jesus who is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come as you have seen Him going into Heaven."¹ After these words the figures vanished. The brightness remained for a while longer and then disappeared like daylight retiring before the darkness of night. The disciples were quite out of themselves, for they now comprehended what had happened to them. The Lord had left them and gone to His Heavenly Father! Many, stunned by grief and amazement, fell to the earth. When the glare had entirely died away, they arose again, and the others gathered around them. They formed groups, the Blessed Virgin stepped forward, and so they stood for some time longer recovering themselves, talking together, and gazing upward. At last, the Apostles and disciples went back to the house of the Last Supper, and the Blessed Virgin followed. Some were weeping like children that refuse to be comforted, others were lost in thought. The Blessed Virgin, Peter, and John were very calm and full of consolation. I saw, however, some among the different groups who remained unmoved, unbelieving, and full of doubts. They withdrew from the rest.

On the top of Mount Olivet, from which Jesus ascended, there was a level rock. On it He stood addressing the multitude before He blessed them and the cloud of light received Him. His footsteps remained impressed on the stone, and on another the mark of one hand of the Blessed Virgin. It was past noon before the crowd entirely dispersed.

The Apostles and disciples now felt themselves alone. They were at first restless and like people forsaken. But by the soothing presence of the Blessed Virgin they were comforted, and putting entire confidence in Jesus' words that she would be to them a mediatrix, a mother, and an advocate, they regained peace of soul.

A certain fear stole over the Jews in Jerusalem. I saw many closing doors and windows, others gathering together in groups. During the last days, they had experienced some peculiar feelings of alarm, which today were greatly intensified.

On the following days I saw the Apostles always together and the Blessed Virgin with them in the house of the Last Supper. At the last repast of Jesus, and ever after, I saw Mary when at prayer and the breaking of bread always opposite Peter, who now took the Lord's place in the prayer circle and at meals. I received at the time the impression that Mary now held a position of high importance among the Apostles, and that she was placed over the

Church.

The Apostles kept themselves very much aloof. I saw no one out of the great crowd of Jesus' followers going to them into the house of the Last Supper. They guarded more against persecution from the Jews and gave themselves up to more earnest and well regulated prayer than did the disciples dispersed in bands throughout the other apartments of the same house. The latter went in and out more freely. I saw many of them also very devoutly traversing the way of the Lord by night.

At the election of Mathias to the Apostolate, I saw Peter in the house of the Last Supper. He was clothed in his episcopal mantle and was standing in the center of the circle formed by the Apostles. The disciples were gathered in the open side halls. Peter proposed Joses Barsabas and Mathias, both of whom were standing off among the bands of disciples. There were some among these that wanted to be chosen in Judas' place. The two mentioned had never thought of such a thing, and had no desires on the subject. Next day the lots were cast, Barsabas and Mathias being excluded from the assembly. When it was found that the lot had fallen on Mathias, someone went into the disciples' apartments and led him to the Apostles.