

## Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> Week Easter - the Ascension - Year C 2022

**Henri Nouwen:** Waiting is essential to the spiritual life. But waiting as a disciple of Jesus is not an empty waiting. It is a waiting with a promise in our hearts that makes already present what we are waiting for. We wait during Advent for the birth of Jesus. We wait after Easter for the coming of the Spirit, and after the ascension of Jesus we wait for his coming again in glory. We are always waiting, but it is a waiting in the conviction that we have already seen God's footsteps.....

It is often in our absence that the Spirit of God manifests itself. When Jesus left his disciples, he said: "It is for your own good that I am going, because unless I go, the Paraclete [the Spirit] will not come to you. However, when the Spirit of truth comes, he will lead you to the complete truth" (John 16: 7;13). It was only in Jesus' absence that his friends discovered the full meaning of his presence. It was only in his absence that they completely understood his words and experienced full communion with him; and it was only in his absence that they could gather in a community of faith, hope, and love.

When we claim for ourselves that we come to our friends in the Name of Jesus – that through us Jesus becomes present to them – we can trust that our leaving will also bring them the Spirit of Jesus. Thus, not only our presence but also our absence becomes a gift to others.

**Thomas Merton:** The Ascension is the feast of silence and interior solitude when we go up to live in heaven with Jesus: for He takes us there, after He has lived a little while on earth among us. That is the grace of Ascension Day: to be taken up into the heaven of our own souls, the apex mentis, the point of immediate contact with God. To rest on this quiet peak, in the darkness that surrounds God. To live there through all trials and all business with the *'Tranquillus Deus Tranquillans omnia'* ('the tranquil God who makes all things tranquil - St Bernard)."