

Sunday after Ascension

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Preacher: Fr. Randall Russell

[0 : 00] In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. In this morning's collect we pray.

! O God, the King of glory, who has exalted Thine only Son, Jesus Christ, with great triumph unto Thy kingdom in heaven, we beseech Thee, leave us not comfortless.

But why do we pray that? Why would we ever pray for God to leave us not comfortless? Well, we pray for that because of our Lord's ascension.

For even though it is most certainly good that our crucified and risen Lord has now ascended into heaven, has now returned to His Father who is in heaven, there is now a real sense of sadness and loss at the fact that Jesus no longer walks among us as He did in the days before His ascension.

And so today, on the Sunday after our Lord's ascension, we pray, and leave us not comfortless.

[1 : 24] Because as glorious as it is that our crucified and risen Lord now sits at the right hand of God the Father in heaven, our Lord's ascension is looking forward towards an even more glorious day.

that day when the Spirit of God would once again descend upon the earth in order to breathe new life into His creation.

For just ten days after our Lord's ascension into heaven came the day of Pentecost, that day when from the throne of heaven our Lord would send the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, upon His church.

Therefore, in this morning's Gospel, Jesus tells His disciples, But when the Helper, or the Comforter, comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of me, and you also will bear witness of me.

And the reason why that is such a big deal is because before the Comforter comes, before the Holy Spirit is sent, the Apostles just never seem to get it.

[2 : 50] They just never seem to understand exactly what is really going on. For example, before the day of Pentecost, the Apostles often fight among themselves.

They often argue about who among them is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And on the night when our Lord Jesus Christ is betrayed, where are His Apostles? They all fled.

They all abandoned Him. And on Easter Sunday, most of them were still hiding behind locked doors for fear of persecution and even death.

But after the day of Pentecost, after the Holy Spirit is sent, all of that begins to change. Emboldened and strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit, the Apostles finally start to act like Apostles.

they finally start to understand. For no longer do they act like the children of men, but now they start to act more like men of God.

[4 : 06] For again, in this morning's Gospel, Jesus said, But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of me, and you also will bear witness of me.

And dear Christian friends, that same Spirit who descended upon the Apostles on the day of Pentecost is today the very same Spirit who descends upon Joshua James in the waters of Holy Baptism.

For that same Spirit who emboldened the Apostles to fulfill their God-given ministry is the same Spirit who on the day of your confirmation empowered you to do the same.

for that same Spirit who descended upon Christ's church only ten days after our Lord's ascension is today the very same Spirit who descends upon this church at this place in order to bless and sanctify these gifts and creatures of bread and wine so that we may be partakers of Jesus Christ's most blessed body and blood.

