

The Feast of Ascension

Father Luka, Sidaros
8/06/2016

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit the One God Amen.
Let us rejoice beloved with great joy today, that our Lord Jesus raised us with Him, and in Him to heaven, and he sat us at the right hand of the Father.

Regarding knowing the feast; we celebrated the feast of Ascension many times, and we know well the events and details of the matter; but we need to ask ourselves: Did we really experience the joy of ascending from earth to heaven? Did we taste and feel one day, as if our bonds to earth as if it is not there.

In the history of our church, quite a number of fathers were seen during prayers, as if they were not connected to earth, as if they are floating in the air, quite a number of fathers mentioned that in their biographies.

The meaning of Ascension in our practical daily lives, is that Jesus has raised us above the rest of creation. In the gospel about the one who was invited to follow Jesus and he apologized, the second one and the third one did the same. Why is that? Because the old nature, the body and the world are very heavy. It is very hard for someone to follow Jesus, the commandments, self denial, humility and holiness; it is hard.

In the feast of the Ascension, our Lord Jesus did not say follow me, but He has taken me with Him. He raised me with Him. He did not leave the matter to my nature and my weakness. He took me with Him. Therefore, the daily experience that we really feel is that Jesus raised me up. He liberated me, he ascended me. But sometimes we find ourselves falling to the ground, despite Jesus saying that He raised us with Him to heaven; an act which our Lord has actually done to us.

But we find that we are sinking in a swirl of thoughts. Or having very little in loving others. We find ourselves falling down to an earthly level. Any word would upset us. Any little thing would bring us down, make us tired, falling to the ground, not ascending up high but drowning in earthly concerns.

As we know we will all leave all this earthly concerns one day, according to our Christian believe we are heavenly citizens. Our earthly life is just like a person in transit. But if earthly concerns overburden us, we will never enjoy the ascension. When Jesus raised us up, He really lifted us high above all levels.

We find some people quarrelling, at what level those people are? It is material, money or possessions controlling our thoughts exceedingly. It makes us not able to ascend, not able to enjoy the heavenly matters, if we are tied to dust.

Lord Jesus untied the links of humans to the dust, those who believe in Him he took them with Himself. He said I have broken my shackles. But someone will come back to fall on the ground again, to live at an earthly level again, and the concerns of the earth again, to live with the self and the ego, which the Lord has mortified to raise us up high.

What is the difference between us and the rest of the world if we behave the same way as others? Where is the superiority of love? Love lifts humans above the level of the rest world. But when we get back to the self, we are down to the dust again.

Where is the superiority of forgiveness? Forgiveness is a high matter. For a mature person, if someone insults him, he is above the levels of animosity above every level of hatred. Try to experience it once, come back to yourself and cling to Jesus and ask Him didn't you raise me up high with You to heaven? Didn't you lift me up why I am falling to the ground again?

You can find some unbelievers, who are behaving in much better way than believers, something to be ashamed of. Our Lord Jesus has raised us up high, he gave us the grace to be above the earth's force of gravity. It is a matter for us to taste it.

To respond to evil by evil, to an insult by insult, we would be at the same level of the world. But if we are raised up above, when we are insulted, we will bless. Since we have been given a grace, and raised up high. This is the experience which we should live to taste the Ascension.

How God gave us His Grace that I may have no animosity between me and anyone in the world? My conscious and my heart are full of love, as he lifted me above the level of dust, the world and life. The gospel says that when Lord Jesus was ascending, He put His hands on the apostles and He blessed them. When they saw Him ascending to heaven, they worshiped Him. They submitted themselves to Him, to that Who ascended to heaven.

Ascension is an experience. In the popular expression people say this person is large. The large people of the world are trading in millions, and they would not be concerned about little matters because they are large.

It can be said about us who experienced the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ in our lives that we are above the world, we have been raised to the above. The people who are in the world cannot do or reach what we are doing.

When His Holiness, Pope Kyrillos 6th was selected to the papacy, some people came up against him. They insulted him with unfounded accusations. When His Holiness met with some of them after his selection he met them with all love and generosity. They responded by asking his forgiveness.

It is beautiful for a person to lower himself or herself to the ground, and to be at the level of all other people. It doesn't need effort to go to the ground, to be at the level of the dust and to uphold Christ Who will raise us to be with Him up high,

Let everyone of us, wherever we are, to taste this, to be large, to be uplifted. Our hearts to be raised high, and our view to be from above not from below. As we look from above, we see things differently. Our eyes look differently as we go lower, we will be limited being in a small space and be limited and see any small little matters.

Up high, our eyes will be seeing a the vastness and our hearts can take the whole of the universe as we are lifted up, the circle will be vast. As we go down, the world will be much smaller, our spirit will be tighter and our lives is difficult.

Rejoice in the feast of Ascension with real joy with prayers, uniting with our Lord Jesus, in the Holy Communion, not as a habit, but to have holy communion with serenity, and feel that we are united with Lord Jesus Christ, who is raising us to heaven, and He will raise us above angels.

Limiting ourselves to the material matters; (not to neglect daily matters, but to look from above to sort these matters with grace); the whole world has fallen. It is falling down, with all its glory glimmer and all its enormous attractions.

The whole world Lost its power when Jesus was crucified on the cross and gave us the power of the cross. We say that the world was crucified for us, and I us were crucified to the world, and that we are raised to heaven, He raised us up with Him and He sat us with Him in heaven above every principality and every name.

To Him is all glory forever. Amen.