

FEAST OF THE ASCENSION-CYCLE A-2008

If you have ever had the thrill of visiting Rome, you know that the city is crawling with fountains of all sorts of sizes, shapes and description. Most tourists are familiar with the famous Trevi fountain. There's also the huge fountain of Neptune in the Piazza Novona, gushing with water. Twenty four hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, the fountains splash with water. What a sight it is to see the children of Rome splashing and laughing in those fountains.

What most folks don't realize is that virtually all the fountains in Rome are not mechanically powered. Centuries ago, the ingenious Romans built aqueducts that carried water from the mountains into the city. These aqueducts were built in a way that the force of gravity alone carries the water into the city and gushes into each of the beautiful fountains.

This fact gives us insight in today's great feast of the Ascension of Jesus. Today's Gospel tells us that Jesus sent His disciples to bring the news of the graces offered through His life, death and resurrection through the preaching and administration of the Sacraments. Just as the source of water for the fountains of Rome is the mountain stream, so the source of grace remains Christ Himself. Just as the pure water rushes down the mountains to Rome, so living water gushes forth from the Church. Jesus is the AFountain of all holiness!

Just before Jesus ascended into heaven, He commanded His disciples to communicate the graces flowing from Him through preaching and dispensing the seven Sacraments. Whenever a priest offers the Eucharistic Prayer at Mass, whenever he baptizes or absolves someone in confession, graces gush forth from Jesus, our Eternal High Priest! So, when we receive the sacraments, most especially when we, in the state of grace, receive His Body and Blood in the Holy Eucharist, we are not merely attending a remembrance of what once happened in history. Rather, the Lord's sending forth of His disciples in today's Gospel reminds us that His graces flow forth to every soul that yearns to receive them!

Know that I am with you always, until the end of the world. These are the words of Jesus to us today. This is His promise to us today. Yes, today's feast is about His being taken up. But, through His life-giving sacraments, through the life and ministry of His Bride, the Church, He remains among us, calling, inviting, loving!

Let us pray for the grace to always rejoice in this fact of faith. As that mountain water gushes into the fountains of Rome, let the living water of Christ's grace gush into our hearts. Let us hold the image of the children of Rome, splashing in the fountains, remind us of the joy, the life and the grace Jesus Christ offers us, the children of His Father!

AMEN.