

Men of Galilee, why do you stand, looking to the skies?

+ In memory of Phyllis Griffith, gentle and kindly lady who cooked at OLPH for the priests during my residence there.

IS THE ASCENSION ABOUT DEPARTURE OR ARRIVAL?

BOTH.

ASCENSION IS THE LIMINAL TIME BETWEEN DEPARTURE AND ARRIVAL.

The disciples yearn for the presence of Jesus as they return home, apparently alone, from his departure.

But the angels chide them: Quit looking up to the skies! Get with it. YOU Make Jesus present NOW.

And their sorrow at departure is mollified by the hope of arrival.

All of our own lives are filled with departures and arrivals. At the airport we go the up ramp for departures, and the down ramp for arrivals. And if Jesus was to be truly human it would be so for him as well.

And for the bereft disciples?

The Spirit broods all around them, not in the empty sky, but in their midst and will burst into flame above their heads at Pentecost

We are like the disciples, are we not?

Where is Jesus? Where is the Spirit?

In Iraq? Syria? Africa? Next door?

Has the Spirit departed?

No, the Spirit flickers in the hearts of the oppressed.

Like tiny sparks in the brooding dark.

Oten silent, but always stirring.

And so in this, our liminal time between departure, and arrival, we pray:

Come Holy Spirit,

often silent, but always stirring.

In our world where the Spirit of evil seems to hold the upper hand,

enliven us. Encourage us. Refresh us.

We need not stand as mourners

looking up at the empty sky.

We can make Jesus present to those around us.

Come Holy Spirit renew the very face of the earth.

Amen.

Personal Notes:

As I write this our restless skies which have stirred with wind and dust, have opened up and poured down a deluge upon our parched desert. Out of the blue, a deluge. Let it be that way with the Spirit upon our parched souls!

On May 17, 1958 I was ordained at Our Lady of Lourdes in Omaha.

Praise God for those who have made Jesus present in my life over these many years.

Today marks the third week I have been afflicted, homebound, and recoveing from Mersa.

Thank you for your prayers. They are helping.

Fr. Fitz

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