

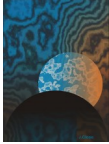
Here's a text from one of my great teachers, Fr Brendan Byrne SJ: "The biblical accounts – given in the First Reading (Acts 1:1-11) and the Gospel (Luke 24:46-53) – do not mean that Jesus, at the end of his earthly career, literally ascended in the way described. The very clear parallels with the account in 2 Kings 2:1-18 of the ascension of the prophet Elijah (blessing disciples; promising a share of the Spirit; being carried up to heaven) suggest that St Luke is completing here his characteristic depiction of Jesus in terms of the prophet Elijah. As the prophet's life came to an end without the experience of death – giving rise to the expectation that he would one day return as forerunner of the Messiah – so Jesus, having escaped the bonds of death by rising from the dead and having made his risen presence clearly known to those who are to become key witnesses, now makes a death-less, Elijah-like ascent to heaven, with a similar pledge of Spirit and the promise of an eventual return (Acts 1:11).

What St Luke is basically conveying by this is the continuity between the ministry of Jesus and that of the disciples who, when empowered with the Spirit at Pentecost, will become eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word. So the disciples are not dismayed, nor do they lament the departure of Jesus. They have a task to fulfil; they will be equipped for that task; they have Jesus' promise that he will return. So, having worshipped the One they now recognise to be God's Son as well as Messiah, they return to Jerusalem with great joy, to await the promised 'clothing with power from on high'.

Beyond and along with this scriptural depiction of the event, at a more deeply theological level, the feast of the Ascension celebrates the Christian sense of Jesus' exaltation to God's right hand. This motif appears very early in the tradition. We find it in the closing stanza of the remarkable christological hymn quoted by Paul in Philippians 2:9-11: 'Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend – in heaven, on earth, and under the earth – and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father'.

What is envisaged here is the completion of Jesus' messianic work: the subjugation of all powers hostile to God and the ensuing liberation of the entire cosmos for the praise and glory of God. The same sense of enthronement, following achievement of the messianic task, finds expression in the frequent reference in the New Testament to Jesus' sitting at God's right hand.

Communicated here is, of course, a vision of the future, an act of hope. The forces hostile to God and to true humanity have by no means yet been fully overcome. The essential blow has been struck in the Paschal victory of Jesus but his messianic work continues as he breathes his Spirit into the Church that carries on his mission. What the Church must understand – what the Ascension assures her – is that accompanying all her labour and suffering is the victory of her risen Lord, who now stands at the right hand of God interceding on behalf of all (Rom 8:34). In this sense the Ascension is not simply something that happened to Jesus – his departure, physically, from this world. It is the feast that celebrates the hope that his triumph will ultimately be ours as well."

 **Reflection by Artist, Jenny Close** The story of the Ascension reminds me of that part of Einstein's work on relativity which has evolved into theories of black holes. The most fascinating thing about a black hole is that within it, the laws of physics cease to apply. As a planet, for example, crosses over into a black hole it passes through a photon sphere which is like a cloud of light surrounding the hole. Then it goes into the dark part of the hole beyond the event horizon and disappears forever entering a realm of infinite gravity. It eventually crashes into the dense body at the core of the hole which is called the singularity. Understand – no? Neither do I! The images that the words evoke are so tantalising that I find myself wanting to draw them. The

language that Astronomers use when describing black holes is akin to poetry. What else can they do when the laws of their discipline no longer apply?

Luke had the same problem describing the Ascension: he writes that Jesus was 'lifted up ... and a cloud took him from their sight' and the disciples were left gawking at the sky. Did Jesus really 'go' anywhere? Where is heaven – is it really in the sky, or even 'up'? Surely Luke is bending language in order to express the inexpressible about the shift in the disciples' perception of Jesus in that strange (fourth dimensional) time between the passion and Pentecost.

TEND AND BEFRIEND The feast of the Visitation, the meeting between Mary of Nazareth and her cousin Elizabeth, was observed on May 31. (Artwork: 'The Visitation' by Janet McKenzie) Janet McKenzie is begging the world to see something in her painting, 'The Visitation'. The faces of Mary and Elizabeth, dark and sombre, thoughtful and aware, in McKenzie's Visitation say something far beyond either the exultation of pregnancy or the creative power of it. This is not a picture about the delirium of motherhood. There is a storm stirring in the hearts of these women – deep and different than most at such a moment as this, something epochal and eruptive.

Women scholars have for long now pointed out that at the moment of change, in the face of awesome, perhaps even terrifying awareness of her situation, Mary does not go to her fiancé, Joseph, for understanding. She does not go to her father for protection. She does not go to the priests of the Temple for vindication. No, Mary goes to another woman. Mary, the pregnant but unwed woman, travels to the hill country to be with her old cousin Elizabeth, who is also pregnant, also dealing with overwhelming change and the isolating implications of it in her life. None of it, the two women knew and the academic world realized over the centuries, made any human sense. After all, to be unmarried and pregnant in the Middle East of that time was dangerous space for a woman. She can be driven out of the family. She will certainly be forever disgraced. She can be stoned to death. So, it seems sensible to wonder, why go to another woman, an old woman, who can herself do nothing to save her, who has no power to make the social situation better? But to a woman it makes sense. Seeking the support of another woman in the midst of struggle has made emotional sense to women for centuries. And now it makes scientific sense, as well. According to principal investigator Shelley E. Taylor of a UCLA study, Behavioral Responses to Stress, 'For decades, psychological research maintained that both men and women rely on fight or flight to cope with stress – meaning that when confronted by stress, individuals either react with aggressive behavior, such as verbal conflict and more drastic actions, or withdraw from the stressful situation.'

But, these researchers discovered, the participants in the five decades of research that consistently confirmed the "fight or flight theory" were primarily men. The UCLA study, using women rather than men for the first time in the history of the study of stress research, discovered that, "fight or flight" is not the primary or normal response of women. Instead, science now understands, women under stress "**tend and befriend.**" They gather with other women to construct other means of dealing with conflict and pressure, rather than aggressive ones. Women, under stress, they found, take care of one another. They take care of children. They continue to concentrate on the functioning and development of the human community. They bring stability to situations of tumult and confusion.

Now science knows what scripture and art, women and society, have known for eons. Mary and Elizabeth – women everywhere – calm the chaos of the world. They show us all another way to be in the midst of the daily maelstroms of life. They help us survive. They bind us together to carry each other, to



carry the human community, to allow others to carry us when we cannot carry ourselves.

To look at McKenzie's Visitation is to look at an alternative world. It is to define the role of women in a new way. It gives new dignity and meaning to the friendship of women. It gives us all reason to believe that there can be another way through conflict other than force.

—from "The Visitation," by Joan Chittister, in 'Holiness & the Feminine Spirit: the art of Janet McKenzie' (Orbis, 2009)

THE PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION The words of this prayer are some of the most beautiful in all of Catholic tradition:

*"God the Father of mercies,
through the death and resurrection of his Son
has reconciled the world to himself
and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins;
through the ministry of the Church
may God give you pardon and peace,
and I absolve you from your sins
In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.*

GOOD SHEPHERD APPEAL This May, we've been thankful for your support of the Good Shepherd Sunday Appeal. Our goal this year is to raise \$75,000 towards to the costs of educating and forming our seminarians. The people of our Archdiocese have given generously and we are closing in on our target. But there is still time to make a gift or begin a monthly donation. Envelopes are available in the church, which can be left either on the collection plate or posted to The GSS Appeal, GPO Box 3089, Canberra, ACT 2601. Donations can also be made on-line through the website www.gcatholic.org.au/donate. Your prayers and financial support for the future priests of our community are vital. THANK YOU!

PLANNED GIVING ENVELOPE NUMBERS: The new Planned Giving year begins on the 1st weekend of July. To cut costs and waste, I have reduced the number of envelope sets ordered. This will mean a change in envelope number for anyone who has a current number over 70. My apologies for this, I am aware some of you have had these numbers for a long time but in doing so we are saving money and resources.

New sets should be available in the coming weeks, look out for them in the foyer of SHC or at the back of The Chapel at Tuross. If you have any questions please contact me either by phone or email. Thank you. Rachel.

BIRTHDAY INVITATION! The Moruya Caring Group turns one year old in June and we are celebrating 10am on Friday 7th June in the Cafe Vulcan's rear room. The volunteers give freely of their time and gifts as the group does not charge, accept or raise money. Everyone is invited to attend. Come and have a chat. A small plate to share would be appreciated. Phone 0431354993 if you are able to attend or just pop in.

POPE: Holy Spirit 'turns words into dynamite'

The Holy Spirit is what gives power, life and dynamism to evangelisation, not good rhetorical skills, Pope Francis said yesterday. According to St Luke, words become effective not thanks to rhetoric, but thanks to the Holy Spirit, "which has the power to purify the word, to make it the bearer of life." The Holy Spirit is what makes the Bible different from a written history, he said at the general audience. The Holy Spirit "helps us to make that word a seed of holiness, a seed of life, to be effective. When the Spirit visits the human word, it becomes dynamic, like 'dynamite,' that is, capable of lighting hearts and blowing up patterns, resistances and walls of division, opening up new paths and expanding the boundaries of God's people," he emphasised. "The narrative plot of the Acts of the Apostles starts right here, from the overabundance of the life of the Risen One transfused into his Church."

The Acts of the Apostles, he explained, tells of "the journey of the Gospel in the world and shows us the marvellous union be-

tween the Word of God and the Holy Spirit that inaugurates the time of evangelisation."

Pope Francis reflected on the "the promise of the Father," that "John baptised with water, but in a few days you will be baptised with the holy Spirit. The baptism in the Holy Spirit, in fact, is the experience that allows us to enter into a personal communion with God and to participate in his universal salvific will. There is therefore no struggle to earn or merit the gift of God. Everything is given for free and in due time."

CATHOLICS TO HAVE 'ECOLOGICAL CONVERSION'

Catholics in Brisbane are being urged to take up the call of Pope Francis' encyclical Laudato Si' and support an urgent environmental action plan aimed at protecting the planet. Central to the plan is a commitment to 'ecological conversion' throughout the archdiocese.

Ahead of World Environment Day on June 5, Bishop Ken Howell pointed to the "pressing realities" of climate change that had been highlighted when Australian bishops met with bishops from Oceania last April. "Our neighbouring bishops from the Pacific Islands spoke of the grave problems they face through rising sea levels. Families will lose home and income through this growing environmental issue. Added to this, we are all seeing the evidence of serious damage to ecosystems here in Australia and around the world – coral bleaching of the Great Barrier Reef, fish dying in the Murray Darling and the serious issues that are arising from tracts of rainforests being cleared in our country."

Bishop Howell has worked closely with a 14-member 'Living Laudato Si' committee to examine how Catholics could make practical changes to the environment around them. In its annual report is a vision of Brisbane Archdiocese "in which every parish, school and agency understands the call to ecological conversion enunciated in Laudato Si' and responds wholeheartedly to transform our personal and institutional operations and practices to develop an Integral Ecology".

"Its task is to engage the whole of the archdiocese so that we all deepen our commitment to care for our common home as an essential part of our mission," Bishop Howell said. "In Laudato Si', Pope Francis speaks about the urgent need for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of the planet."

THE GALONG GATHERING: At the recent gathering of the Clergy of the Archdiocese at Galong, Fr Tony Kelly, CCsR, spoke of the mystery of Christ. He emphasised 'the scandal and shock of the Cross.' Noting that we live in an 'irritable culture,' he encouraged us to never forget that while foolishness to the world, the Cross is the Crucified Christ, who is 'the power and wisdom of God' (1 Cor. 1:24-25). "We can never leave out the cross!" he echoed, "but must embrace its power, a power defined by self-giving love. The Cross is the Christian's identity and victory; the 'power and wisdom' of a God who acts in a way the world least expects! Jesus' self-emptying on the cross is God's greatest act of humility and self-revelation of 'the aboriginal self-giving of God.'

He then asked: "Is the true revelation of God passing us by? For the Cross is the signature of the Resurrection! Whereby even the Risen Jesus on that Easter morning still proudly bore the marks of the wounds that were now transformed."

During these days the Sacrament of Reconciliation, the 'forgotten sacrament' as Archbishop Christopher reminded us, was close to our minds and hearts. The confessional has been, is and will continue to be a place where important conversations and conversions take place.

IPSS Manager, Maria Hicks, focused on The Gift of our Children. She commented upon the recent changes to the ACT law and updated us on new mandatory reporting obligations, which now rightly require all people over 18 to report any suspected abuse. Angela McCabe, a trauma psychologist, led a helpful session on resilience and self-care. Pastoral education supervisors Barbara Hall and Susanne Schmidt, entered the fray, too, on supervision for clergy. (PTO to p4)

First Reading Acts 1:1-11

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

In my earlier work, Theophilus, I dealt with everything Jesus had done and taught from the beginning until the day he gave his instructions to the apostles he had chosen through the Holy Spirit, and was taken up to heaven. He had shown himself alive to them after his Passion by many demonstrations: for forty days he had continued to appear to them and tell them about the kingdom of God. When he had been at table with them, he had told them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for what the Father had promised. 'It is,' he had said, 'what you have heard me speak about: John baptised with water but you, not many days from now, will be baptised with the Holy Spirit.' Now having met together, they asked him, 'Lord, has the time come? Are you going to restore the kingdom to Israel?' He replied, 'It is not for you to know times or dates that the Father has decided by his own authority, but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and then you will be my witnesses not only in Jerusalem but throughout Judaea and Samaria, and indeed to the ends of the earth.' As he said this he was lifted up while they looked on, and a cloud took him from their sight. They were still staring into the sky when suddenly two men in white were standing near them and they said, 'Why are you men from Galilee standing here looking into the sky? Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven, this same Jesus will come back in the same way as you have seen him go there.'

Responsorial Psalm Ps 46:2-3. 6-7. 8-9. R. v.6

(R.) God mounts his throne to shouts of joy: a blare of trumpets for the Lord.

1. All peoples, clap your hands, cry to God with shouts of joy! For the Lord, the Most High, we must fear, great king over all the earth.
2. God goes up with shouts of joy; the Lord goes up with trumpet blast. Sing praise for God, sing praise, sing praise to our king, sing praise.
3. God is king of all the earth.

Very fine and intelligent presenters.

Wednesday evening is always the highlight since it celebrates the unity of our Presbyterate in a Jubilarian Mass and Dinner. This year we celebrated Fr's Allen Crowe and Peter My's 25 years of the priesthood; Archbishop Francis Carroll and Fr Neville Drinkwater 65 years; Fr Stan Sniezek 60 years and Fr Peter Gannon 50 years. We were joined by Kevin and Margaret Croker who recently received the Papal honour of Knight and Dame of the Order of Saint Gregory. Their extraordinary service to the Church and outstanding dedication to the care of the priests of this Archdiocese is beyond compare. This Assembly was a graced time. I was particularly struck by the joy and unity of the clergy.

-Fr Trenton van Reesch

NOTE: Fr Trenton has just been announced as the new Administrator of St Christopher's Cathedral

Sing praise with all your skill.
God is king over the nations;
God reigns on his holy throne.

Second Reading Eph 1:17-23

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Ephesians

May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give you a spirit of wisdom and perception of what is revealed, to bring you to full knowledge of him. May he enlighten the eyes of your mind so that you can see what hope his call holds for you, what rich glories he has promised the saints will inherit and how infinitely great is the power that he has exercised for us believers. This you can tell from the strength of his power at work in Christ, when he used it to raise him from the dead and to make him sit at his right hand, in heaven, far above every Sovereignty, Authority, Power, or Domination, or any other name that can be named, not only in this age, but also in the age to come. He has put all things under his feet, and made him, as the ruler of everything, the head of the Church; which is his body, the fullness of him who fills the whole creation.

Gospel Acclamation Mt 28:19. 20

Alleluia, alleluia!

Go and teach all people my gospel.

I am with you always, until the end of the world.

Alleluia!

Gospel Lk 24:46-53

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

Jesus said to his disciples: 'You see how it is written that the Christ would suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that, in his name, repentance for the forgiveness of sins would be preached to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses to this. 'And now I am sending down to you what the Father has promised. Stay in the city then, until you are clothed with the power from on high.' Then he took them out as far as the outskirts of Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. Now as he blessed them, he withdrew from them and was carried up to heaven. They worshipped him and then went back to Jerusalem full of joy; and they were continually in the Temple praising God.

SACRED HEART PARISH

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Parish Administrator Fr Stephen Astill SJ;

Deacon Emeritus Rev. Paul Rummery;

Youth Minister: Juliette Pierre 0424 257 102

Parish Secretary Mrs Rachel Glover;

Cleaner: Mrs Sue Fawcett

Tuross Caring Group: 0497 315 534

Moruya Caring Group: 0431 354 993

PARISH SCHOOLS: St Mary's Parish Primary School

Principal: Mrs Noelene O'Neill

Carroll College Principal: Mrs Jacqui Heffernan

The Feast of the Ascension (Year C) 2/6/2019

Weekend Masses: Saturday Vigil 6pm Moruya; Sunday at 'The Pines', Tuross 8am; Moruya 10am

Weekday Masses: Monday Communion Service 9.15am; Weekday Masses: Tues 5.30pm, Wed, Thurs & Fri 9.15am. Thurs 10.30am Mass at IRT; Fri Anointing Mass
-Rosary after Mass

Reconciliation: Saturday 10.30-11.30am (or by appointment)
Baptisms, Anointings, Weddings & Funerals by appointment.

For the sick: Fay Goff, Barbara Kirk, Joan Ranken, Eunice Priestley, Fr Kevin Murphy, Lori-Anne Foran, Catherine Hulse, Gerri Maynard, Frank Honan, Kath Hodges, Julie Kay, Joy Jaensch, Kerrie Cooper, Ted Lewis, Therese Wood, Clair Holmes, Julia Hanslow, David Simpson, Viola Connellan, Graham Beer, Eddie Hybler, Declan Holmes, Noeleen Norman, Michael Heffernan, Lincoln Geff and John Bolton

For the deceased: Shane Masters

Welcome to Archbishop Chris Prowse for the Sacrament of Confirmation

CONFIRMATION CANDIDATES: We welcome back to this parish a man who is with us at every Mass—he always gets a mention in the Eucharistic Prayer—our Archbishop, Christopher Prowse! One of his special roles as a bishop leading a diocese is to go around the parishes of his diocese and celebrate this sacrament of Confirmation. This is our turn tonight! Welcome especially, therefore to this Mass our parish/school candidates: Nash Ganderton, Max Colbourne, Zane Brady, Beau Mullins, Koby Donnelly, Ellie Van Werdenburg, Scarlett Walters, Will Grant, Ethan Quick, Kehlei Cowan, Marc Graziani and Ryley Bonner-Combes.

They have all done **SO** much to prepare for this sacramental event. Some sacraments we do often, like the Eucharist, Reconciliation and (less frequently) Anointing of the Sick. But Confirmation is with those other sacraments that are (generally speaking) celebrated only once in a person's life: Baptism, Marriage (apart from Annulment or the death of a spouse) and Holy Orders (actually which deacons receive once, priests twice and bishops thrice - but each is ONCE only!).

The church also uses the word 'sacrament' in a broader sense of any encounter a person has with God. In all the meetings these 12 young people (and their parents! - Parents are not just 'taxi drivers', but educators, even the first educators, of their children in matters of faith and life itself). Thanks to each family, including the brothers and sisters of our candidates for the generous spirit of co-operation, service and sacrifice you have all made. Well done! I wish you all a pleasant family celebration, in whatever form it may take, or whenever or however it may take place, after tonight's Mass. The children et al will be having theirs together on Monday; this was to allow families to have a family celebration this evening.

Special thanks to the School's (outstanding!) new Principal, Mrs Noelene O'Neill, who had moved into this position so seamlessly from her great predecessor, Mick Lowe; Noelene is a person I have come to know better over these past months; these students and all her students (and Staff) can indeed look to her as a person of this Sacrament of Confirmation, with those Gifts of the Spirit. Great thanks also to the Assistant Principal, the legendary Marg Croese, a person of competence and quiet achievement - and many hours of hidden hard work! To Fran Devonald, the new Religious Education Co-ordinator this year, who has shown that great things happen through being a team player; thank you, Fran, for humility and engagement. I must confess publicly my envy of Fr Martins Aloga and St Bernard's Parish because they have Fran as a parishioner exercising great leadership in the parish as well as in this school. And I want to pay tribute to the Grade 6 teacher, Megan Grant. Her students love her and respect her. I have seen the way she relates to them, and I understand their love and respect. She has earned it.

St Mary's School is a great school, not only because of these specific Staff members, but also for all the other Staff members, teachers, assistant teachers, especially the Aboriginal teacher, Mrs Kerry Boyenga, our magnificent new Youth Minister Juliette Pierre (who brings delight not only to youth but to all whom she encounters), administrative staff, volunteers, School Community Council members, bus drivers, ground staff - the school community has so many people 'working together for good' (Romans 8.28). To parents, you have made a good and right decision on this school as the one to accompany you in your child's growth and education.

THE SOLEMN FEAST OF THE ASCENSION:

It's an odd sort of Feast in a way, because it used to make a lot more sense to our medieval and earlier predecessors who acknowledged the obvious truth that the earth is flat, heaven (or seven heavens) are above and hell (or in its seven levels) are below. Ikea did not invent vertical thinking; the church has had it from way back! It's got a lot going for it.

However, thanks be to God, Galileo set us right on the big picture of the cosmos: our earth is round not flat; we, in this 'third rock from the Sun', are not the centre point of God's creation. We are spinners and rotators.

So, we need to do some adjustment to our vertical imagery of this Feast. How can we go about that? (PTO)