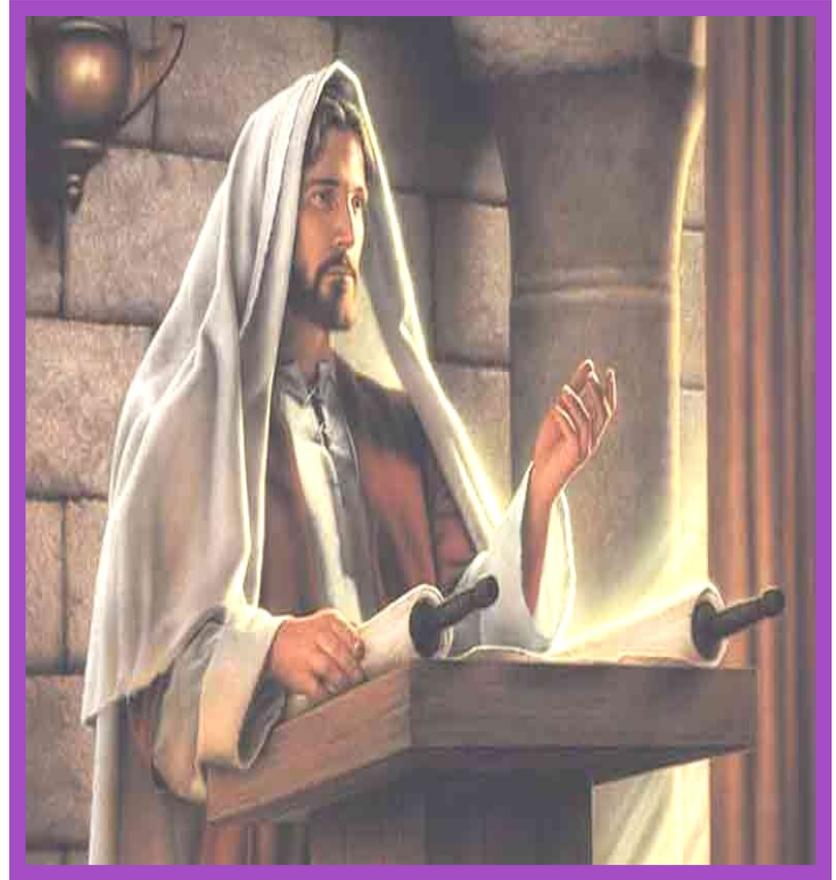


order, above the sublimity of the archangels with no limit amid all the glory of heaven to the heights of its ascent till, received into the company of the Eternal Father. It was made sharer of the Throne of His glory to Whose Nature it was united in the Son.

Since the Ascension of Christ is our uplifting, and whither the glory of Our Head shall go thither the hope of our body is called, let us then rejoice exceedingly with fitting joy. Let us be glad with devout giving of thanks. For on this day, not alone are we made sure heirs of paradise, but in Christ we have already reached the heights of heaven. We have obtained more abundant gifts through the ineffable favor of Christ than we lost through the envy of the devil. Amen.



**SERMON ON
THE LORD'S ASCENSION
FROM THE FATHER'S OF THE CHURCH
155 - 1**



JESUS, OUR FIRST PREACHER!

ASCENSION THURSDAY

Based on the Divine Office-Douay-Rheims Version

Volume 2 - Pages 1346 - 1347 (1962 edition)

Commentary on the Gospel of Mark 16: 14-20

by: Saint Leo the Great, Pope and Doctor

After the glorious and blessed Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby in three days He restored that true temple of God which the impiety of the Jews had destroyed, on this day, the number of the sacred forty was fulfilled. They were ordained by divine providence and used to increase sacred knowledge so that while the time of Our Lord's Bodily Presence among us was by Him extended by this measure of time, our faith in His Resurrection was strengthened by proofs close linked one with the other.

The death of Christ greatly troubled the hearts of the Disciples because of the torment of the Cross, the giving up of His Spirit and the burial of His lifeless Body... The words of the women in the Gospel that the stone had been rolled back, that the tomb was empty and that angels there were witness *that the Lord was alive*, seemed to the Apostles as those of deranged persons. The Spirit of Truth would never have allowed this uncertainty which arose from human infirmity to enter the hearts of His preachers, unless that this faltering anxiety, this anxious hesitancy, might provide a foundation for our faith...

The days between the Resurrection of the Lord and His Ascension, were not passed in simple idleness. During this time, great truths were established and great mysteries revealed... The Lord breathing upon them the Holy Spirit was poured into all the Apostles, and to Blessed Peter above all

the rest was entrusted, first, the Keys of the Kingdom, and next, the care of the Lord's Flock.

During these days to two of the Disciples a third Person, the Lord, is joined as a companion while they journeyed. That all shadow of doubt might be wiped from our minds, He rebuked the slow-wittedness of those who were fearful and hesitant. Their hearts glowing they conceived the flame of faith...

In the midst of these and other wonders, when the Lord had appeared in their midst and had said to them: *Peace be to you* (Lk. xxiv. 36; Jn. xx. 26), the Disciples began to be greatly troubled by grievous doubts thinking that they beheld not a body but a ghost. He confutes these thoughts which were contrary to reality, firmly confronting the eyes of the doubters with the marks of the Crucifixion which still remained on His Hands and in His feet, and bids them to feel them carefully with their own hands... by means of them the wounds of unbelieving hearts may be healed...

...It was that the most blessed Apostles and all the Disciples, who had been fearful because of the outcome of the Cross, hesitant in their belief in the Resurrection, were now so strengthened by this manifest truth. Upon the Lord's entering into the glory of heaven they were not alone nor afflicted with sadness. Rather they were filled *with great joy* (Lk. xxiv. 52).

In truth it was a great and indescribable cause for joy, when, in the presence of the holy multitude, the nature of human kind ascended above the dignity of all the heavenly creatures. Rising even above the angelic