

Pastor's Corner



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Christ is Risen! He is Risen Indeed!

Human beings began wearing clothes around 100,000 or so years ago. Other members of the animal kingdom have “natural” clothes: their hides, their scales, or their shells. Human beings, however, are the only animals that fashion clothing for themselves ... and this is for various reasons / purposes. Among utilitarian uses, we put on clothes to keep warm, to protect us from rain and other elements, to insulate us from heat or danger, to mark us as having a particular job, purpose, or rank. Among the aesthetic uses of clothes, we wear clothes to enhance our skin color or body shape, and maybe to hide imperfections. Clothes can adorn us with status, mark a special occasion, and differentiate gender or cultures. Clothes can make us look more attractive and more powerful looking. All of these differing uses of clothes, however, have one thing in common: clothes are always something added to us, apart from our being, and can be put on or taken off.

In the Gospel this Ascension weekend, Jesus speaks to His disciples about being “***clothed with power from on high.***” Because of the gift of free will, we have several choices regarding this. We can reject Jesus’ offer of a unique clothing, not pay attention to it, or not use it rightly. Or we can wear this clothing with dignity and gratitude. The clothing Jesus offers us is not something made from plant fibers or animal skins. This clothing is a power that is the Holy Spirit who takes up divine abode within us.

Jesus’ Ascension is inseparable from Pentecost, which we will celebrate next weekend. The disciples continue Jesus’ ministry of preaching the Good News of death leading to risen Life, only they have been “***clothed with power from on high.***” This is a “clothing” worn on the inside, a personal Presence – the Holy Spirit who empowers them to be a new Presence of Jesus Christ in the world after His Ascension. Jesus' blessing before He was "taken up to Heaven" was His last action-word in their midst. His blessing was His affirmation of the action-word they were to become on Pentecost. Our being clothed in the power of the Holy Spirit is neither utilitarian nor simply aesthetic. This clothing changes us into those who become members of the Body of Christ. This clothing becomes a habit of Life.

Jesus’ Ascension, for us, is a gift and a commissioning. We receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. We preach and teach in His name. We don’t do this on our own, as Jesus promised. We can’t set out to take up Jesus’ mission to preach the Good News until we open ourselves to the Holy Spirit’s Presence with and among us. This ensures us that our work isn’t ours, but Christ’s. Ultimately, our mission is to preach not simply events, but a Person – Jesus Christ, the Risen One. Even more: with the Holy Spirit, we are the Presence of the Risen Lord. This clothing is unequalled.

We should all be familiar with the Catholic doctrine that the Holy Scriptures, the Bible, is the inspired Word of God. Through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, each one of us is an inspired action-word of God when we are faithful to Jesus Christ. He is the Word Made Flesh. This means, as the Gospel suggests, that we are to preach and to live as Jesus commanded. Repentance and forgiveness require that we are first willing to do as Jesus did – give ourselves over to the Spirit of God who heals and gives Life. Having first experienced God’s saving action, we can then be that saving action for others around us.

May Saint Michael the Archangel defend, guide, protect, and intercede for us!

Fr. Larry