

**Homily notes from Canon Philip Dyson**  
**Thursday 13th May 2021 - Feast of the Ascension**

The feast of the Ascension of the Lord is one of those days that some people find difficult to take in, as it can seem that it is the moment when our faith becomes airborne, our feet not firmly any more on the ground.

With all the modern technology, when we can see what happens all around the world at the touch of a finger; when millions of people fly around the world, when rockets fly off to Mars, when man has walked on the moon, this feast is still difficult for some people to take in.

Perhaps if it were renamed the Feast of the Ascended Christ, the emphasis on an abiding truth, rather than thinking of Jesus almost as the first astronaut; for one truth of the Ascension is the glorious availability of Christ. The Christ of our faith abides for ever and is accessible for ever as our indestructible point of reference beyond history.

Jesus himself said ‘When I am lifted up I will draw all people to myself. His first lifting is on the cross; his 2<sup>nd</sup> from the tomb and the third back to his Father in heaven, which then makes him for ever available to us.

To abandon the feast would be to impoverish and diminish our Christian vision. For this fullness of glory belongs to the very heart of our Christian understanding of the relationship between us and God. What else ultimately saves us from dust and ashes, except our vision of Christ as the glory of God in the life of humanity? For in the words of St Irenaeus: “The glory of God is a human fully alive; the life of a human is the vision of God.”

The feast also celebrates the fact the ‘he has raised our human nature to the throne at God’s right hand.’ There at the heart of the Godhead is redeemed humanity. That means Christ’s ascension is something that involves us. It is a day to think of heaven, where Jesus takes his rightful place, back with his Father and where we too one day hope to follow, as he promised I go to prepare a place for you.’ The Preface says he ascended, not to distance himself from our lowly state but that we his members might be confident of following where he, our Head and Founder has gone before.’

Or from EP1 the Roman Canon: “Celebrating the most sacred day on which your Only Begotten Son our Lord placed at the right hand of your glory our weak human nature which he had united to himself.”

As we know only too well, brought home daily on our screens these past months: death overshadows human existence. An ever present reality. No one exempt, no one immune. No one can avoid it. We all have to face and pass through it.

The Ascension of our Lord sheds light on our true dignity and eternal destiny. By his death, resurrection and ascension into heaven, Jesus has conquered and vanquished death. He is the victor who has removed the sting of death. This is the great hope of the Church. We have been redeemed body and soul.

Preface 2 of Easter says “through him the children of light rise to eternal life and the halls of the heavenly kingdom are thrown open to the faithful, for his Death is our ransom from death, and in his rising the life of all has risen..’ Risen, Ascended, Glorified. Alleluia.

Canon Philip Dyson

Holy Family Parish [www.penzancecatholicchurch.org](http://www.penzancecatholicchurch.org)