

(Quick update on Fr. Jose, mention visit and food and flower limits. No fresh fruits or vegetables.

Thank Fr. Tom Mulowney

All during his public ministry, Our Lord had spoken of the mysterious "Kingdom of God."

He was speaking not so much of a place, but of a new era, the period of the "Reign of God."

But a new reign must begin with a coronation, just as a new presidential administration must begin with an inauguration, even though the election had been won months earlier.

The prince may be heir to the kingdom from birth, but until he puts on the crown and takes his seat on the throne, he cannot exercise his authority.

The Ascension celebrates this occasion. T

he one who is both son of God and Son of Adam takes his seat at the right hand of the Father and is crowned King of heaven and earth.

In our first reading from Acts, Jesus, right before he ascended, tells them to wait for the promise of the Father. They think this means a political coup, they ask: "**Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?**"

Jesus corrects them gently. He has in mind something much greater.

He is about to receive the authority to pour out upon them the **very power of God**, the same power that had raised him from the dead (Eph 1:19-21). These ministers, these first bishops, were about to be empowered to help their King build a far wider and more long-lasting empire than Solomon's.

The Kingdom of God would be a worldwide, eternal reign of freedom and joy for all those who would accept the king's sovereignty and be washed in the saving waters of baptism.

(PAUSE)

Jesus did not just talk about Good News, he was and is the good news changing sadness around him to joy, darkness to light.

So his preaching was accompanied by signs and wonders. In this week's gospel, Jesus describes signs that will accompany those who believe and carry the good news to others.

**In His name they will drive out demons, speak new languages. handle poisonous serpents, and heal the sick."**

Some have claimed that such signs and wonders were necessary in the early church to get the ball rolling during those dark days of paganism and brutality, but are no longer to be expected today.

The **Second Vatican Council** took issue with this idea, noting that there is as much brutality, darkness, and opposition to God today as there was in the first century. The council taught, in *Lumen Gentium* (Christ the Light of the Nations) that the Holy Spirit still pours out its gifts upon the faithful of every rank, and that these gifts are to be received with eager gratitude.

Some of these gifts empower us to be like Christ. We call these virtues. Other gifts empower us to be Christ to others. These are called charisms.

Whether remarkable, like healing, tongues, and prophecy, or humble like hospitality, they are all living signs of the Kingdom of God.

It is good to pray for these gifts, but it is not ours to determine which charisms we are to have.

Our mission is simply to use the gifts that has been given to each one of us to the very best of our ability, remembering that to those faithful in small matters, even greater things are given.