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The Ascension of our Lord: audio of homily by Saint Josemaria

Audio recording of a homily by Saint Josemaria given on 19 May 1966 and published in "Christ is Passing By." Available in mp3 format.

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Once more the liturgy reminds us of the final moment in Jesus' life among men, his ascension into heaven. Many things have happened

since our Lord was born in Bethlehem. We have thought of him in the manger, worshipped by the shepherds and the Magi; we have contemplated those long years of unpretentious work in Nazareth; we have gone with him all through the land of Palestine, as he preached the kingdom of God to men and went about doing good to all. And later on, during the days of his passion, we have suffered on seeing him accused and ill-treated and crucified.

Then, sorrow gave way to the joy and light of the resurrection. What a clear and firm foundation for our faith! But perhaps, like the Apostles in those days, we are still weak, and on the day of the ascension we ask Christ: "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom of Israel?" Is it now that we can expect all our perplexity and all our weakness to vanish forever?

Our Lord answers by going up to heaven. Like the Apostles, we remain partly perplexed and partly saddened at his departure. It is not easy, in fact, to get accustomed to the physical absence of Jesus. I am moved when I think that, in an excess of love, he has remained with us, even when he has gone away. He has gone to heaven and, at the same time, he gives himself to us as our nourishment in the sacred host. Still, we miss his human speech, his way of acting, of looking, of smiling, of doing good. We would like to go back and regard him closely again, as he sits down at the edge of the well, tired from his journey; as he weeps for Lazarus; as he prays for a long time; as he feels pity for the crowd...

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