


	<b>Jesus ascends to heaven</b>	
<b>Presence of God</b>	Considering how God looks at me.	
<b>History</b> Matthew 28, 16 – 20	<p>16 Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. 17 When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. 18 Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”.</p>	
<b>Petition</b>	<i>Lord, may I know you more clearly, love you more deeply and follow you more nearly in this time of triumph and jubilation!</i>	
<b>Contemplation</b>	<p><b>Jesus consoles his friends</b>  <i>After having risen from the dead, Jesus appeared to his friends to console them because He is a good friend. Do you remember whom He appeared to? (His mother, Magdalene, the two disciples from Emmaus and the twelve).  For 40 days, He was visiting, consoling and making his disciples strong because He was going to send them to tell the world that He was the Savior and that God loved us. They had to be very brave and courageous to make Jesus known to the world.  One day, He summoned them all and told them that He was going to the Father and gave them a commission. Do you remember which one? (Read again vv 19 – 20) And He also told them that He would be with them every day to the very end of the age.  Let’s close our eyes and imagine that place on the outskirts of Jerusalem, where Jesus gathered his friends to say goodbye... Now, let’s imagine Jesus giving them this great commission: sharing with the world the Word of God... How did they feel? Why did Jesus send them?</i></p> <p><b>Jesus blesses them</b>  <i>Mark tells us that Jesus blessed them with his hand as He was ascending to heaven.  The verb “bless” comes from the Latin verb “benedicere”, whereas “bene” means “good or well”, and “dicere”, “say”. It means to do good, to wish good, to say something good. God always fulfills his promises, so when Jesus blesses his friends, He is doing and wishing them good because He loves them deeply. He loved his friends so much that He died on a cross, forgave them for having abandoned him and then He trusted them with an important commission and trusted his Name and his Body (the Eucharist) to their hands!  Let’s imagine how the disciples felt when Jesus looked at them dearly and blessed them and promised that He would always be with them.</i></p>	<p><b>St. Ignatius invites us to contemplate this aspect of Jesus who consoles those He loves, like true friends do. Ignatius invites us to contemplate “the office of consolation,” which is the work of the Risen Christ Himself and compare it with the way in which friends are wont to console each other” (EE 224). He now becomes invisible to physical eyes to be discovered as a much deeper and inner presence.</b></p> <p><b>Perhaps we can understand better the Ascension if we read the parable of the prodigal son (Lk 15). The Son became a man and carried the sins and the grief of fallen Mankind upon Him (2Co 5,21). He experienced “this misery” in his own flesh and then went to the Father. He was welcome by the Father in his arms. But now the Son carried in his glorified flesh Mankind rescued by his sacrifice. And in Him, we are all accepted, forgiven, welcome and cherished by the Father.</b></p>

**Jesus ascends to heaven, to his Father**

*When Jesus ascended to heaven, He didn't go to an actual place (for example, we cannot say that He ascended 100 meters), but to "the Father": We cannot see him, but HE IS PRESENT! And by being in God, He transcends time and space, He is everywhere, inside us, above us, around us, in this chapel, at home, in the street, with my parents, grandparents, in this world, in the stars, in the universe. And He is filled with joy, strength and love. He reaches the arms of the Father, who is boundless, and He becomes boundless too, almighty, glorious and bright. Let's imagine Jesus meeting his Father. Imagine them hugging each other with endless love.*

**The turn for the disciples to act**

*According to the gospel by Luke, "Jesus went out of sight" and although the disciples didn't see Him any longer, they knew that He was with them. They could feel Him! Now it was their turn to fulfill the commission that Jesus, who had loved them to the end, had given them: to spread the word about Him, to tell people all over the world that God was alive, that God became a man and sacrificed his life to save us, that God is everywhere always accompanying us. Let's close our eyes and imagine the disciples walking different paths to every corner in the world, fully convinced that Jesus was with them. Imagine the disciples telling everybody stories about Jesus. Imagine the disciples talking to all kinds of people, from different walks of life, about Jesus...*

**In Mass, the priest consecrates the bread which becomes the Body of Christ and says a prose doxology to conclude the Eucharistic prayer: through Christ (He is the way) with Him (not alone) and in Him (we are part of his Body); and we ascend to the Father too, who receives us in the unity of the Holy Spirit.**

**Jesus' disciples can tell that Jesus is alive. We also know that Jesus lives within us and we are sent to share his Word with the world.**

**Colloquy**

*Let's sit on the carpet, on the promised land, near Jesus, to hear him in the silence of our hearts. Jesus promised that He would be with us for ever. Close your eyes... make silence and take a deep breath and feel Jesus alive, strong, joyful, loving.... Feel how much He loves you! Tell Him that you want to become a disciple and share with the rest of the world the good news that He is alive.*

