

FROM FR. JASON



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Today we celebrate the Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord into Heaven. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (§668) tells us: “Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.” Christ’s Ascension into heaven signifies his participation, in his humanity, in God’s power and authority. Jesus Christ is Lord: he possesses all power in heaven and on earth. He is “far above all rule and authority and power and dominion,” for the Father “has put all things under his feet.” Christ is Lord of the cosmos and of history. In him human history and indeed all creation are “set forth” and transcendently fulfilled.”

What does all that mean? Well, Bishop Barron breaks it down for us in the following: “Friends, in today’s Gospel, Jesus is taken up to his Father in heaven. We tend to read the Ascension along essentially Enlightenment lines, rather than biblical lines - and that causes a good deal of mischief. Enlightenment thinkers introduced a two-tier understanding of heaven and earth. They held that God exists, but that He lives in a distant realm called heaven, where he looks at the human project moving along, pretty much on its own steam, on earth.

On this Enlightenment reading, the Ascension means that Jesus goes up, up, and away, off to a distant and finally irrelevant place. But the biblical point is this: Jesus has gone to heaven so as to direct operations more fully here on earth. That’s why we pray, “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done *on earth as it is in heaven.*”

Jesus has not gone up, up, and away, but rather - if I can put it this way - more deeply into our world. He has gone to a dimension that transcends but impinges upon our universe.”

How is all this possible? Well, it helps if we understand the 7 traditional qualities of a resurrected body: “**Identity** – The very same body that falls in death will rise to be glorified; we will not get a different body. **Integrity** – We will retain all of the parts of our current bodies. This means every physical part of our body, even the less noble parts (e.g., intestines). **Quality** – What about age, gender, and other physical characteristics? Our bodies will be youthful and will retain our original gender. **Impassability** – We will be immune from death and pain. **Subtlety** – Our bodies will be free from the things that restrain them now. The body is perfected because the soul is perfected. **Agility** – We will have complete freedom of movement. Our souls will direct our bodies without hindrance. **Clarity** – the glory of our souls will be visible in our bodies; we will be beautiful and radiant.” Some helpful Bible passages about this topic include Matthew 13:43, Wisdom 3:7, and 1 Corinthians 15:43.

Finally, we have received amazing news from the Cardinal! On Sunday, May 18th, he ordained eight men as transitional deacons. **We are blessed to have been assigned one of them, Rev. Mr. Michael Oasheim!** His picture is on the top left. He is still a seminarian and over the next year he will serve at our parish by proclaiming the Gospel, performing charitable works, and assisting in liturgical and sacramental life. His ordination to the priesthood is expected to follow in 2026. The following about Deacon Oasheim was published in JerseyCatholic.org: “Little by little, I began to see how God could love me even in my weakness and with my shortcomings,” he said. “I began to see how God can work wonders even with weak people, as well as the need for priests who go out and evangelize.” Oasheim added that he is grateful to the communities, lay people and priests who have helped him over the years. He said their support “has been fundamental for discovering and fostering my vocation.” The day he entered the seminary, November 13, is also the feast day of Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini. That is not his only connection with her. “A couple of years ago, I discovered that I was also baptized on November 13,” he said. “I had taken for granted the day of my baptism, which I see now as something valuable for my salvation.” Additionally, the grounds of Redemptoris Mater Seminary, where his formation has taken place, was once an orphanage founded by the saint. “I would say that Mother Cabrini has assisted me in my path to the priesthood and continues to do so,” Oasheim said. He also recognized Saint Michael the Archangel, who “has defended my vocation and protected me from many sins.”” Let us welcome Deacon Michael as he begins his ministry at our parish!

Peace,