

Ascension of the Lord / World Communications Day

Sunday 4th May 2008 is the Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord. The Church recalls the moment when Jesus bodily ascended to heaven in the presence of his apostles, forty days after the resurrection. Jesus enters triumphantly into heaven to be seated at the right hand of the Father and to share in His glory.

Christ's Ascension is the pledge of future heavenly glory for His Church. The Apostles witnessed our Lord's Ascension but the hope and joy also involved the sadness of losing sight of the resurrected Christ. Yet Scripture reminds us that Jesus promised his followers the power of the Holy Spirit to assist them in fulfilling the mission He entrusted to them. This was to manifest itself in the descent of the Holy Spirit which the Church celebrates at Pentecost.

The Ascension of the Lord this year also coincides with the 42nd World Communications Day. Pope Paul VI established this celebration in 1967 and the Church marks it every year as an opportunity to reflect upon social communications and how they can be harnessed to promote the Gospel message.

The mass media today acts as a source of information and education for many. It has the potential to transform culture. The media can be used to enrich our lives through the transmission of values that enhance truth, beauty and the dignity of the human person. Conversely, it can be serve to undermine our awareness of being children of God.

As is customary the Holy Father has issued a message to accompany World Communications Day. This year Pope Benedict XVI adopts as his theme: "The Media: At The Crossroads between Self-Promotion and Service. Searching for the Truth in order to Share it with Others." The Holy Father speaks of the importance of defending and respecting human dignity in all areas of social communication.