**Homily for the** **Ascension of the Lord***Rev. Francis D. Kim*

        How does ‘weeping’ and ‘rejoicing’ go together? In today’s Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord, Jesus contrasts present sorrows with the future glory to be revealed to those who put their hope and trust in God.

        We are coming to the end of the Easter season. It has been six weeks since we celebrated our Lord’s Resurrection with great joy, and we know the story did not end there. For the past six weeks, we have recalled how the Risen Christ walked among His disciples for forty days.

        And today, Christ was taken up into heaven to be seated at the right hand of the Father. Departure and Ascension of Jesus was both an end and a beginning for His disciples.
Ascension of the Lord obviously marked the end of His earthly life. While it was the end of His physical presence with His disciples, it marked the beginning of His presence with them in a new, deeper, and more spiritual way.

        With the promise of the Holy Spirit, the disciples were strengthened in their belief that all things were possible with God. They will never be alone. Jesus continues to be present to them and to us in all times and all places by the power of the Holy Spirit.

        By His Ascension, Jesus defeated evil and conquered death and sin. It was God’s total victory over the world. So, we hope today to have the promise of eternal life in heaven.

        Jesus shows us our destination, where is heaven, our true homeland. Jesus came from heaven. He took the exact human nature of each and every one of us in soul, spirit, and body. Divinity of God joined to our humanity. Christ was truly human. In human nature, He suffered our trials and frustrations, and shared our hope and joy in this world. He knew the normal human sufferings of being tired, thirsty, and rejected. He became like us.

        And, now by His Ascension, His humanity joined again to the Divinity of God. He shows us our future glory in Heaven. Jesus gives the truth about our life and our future. Someday, we will go to heaven with great joy. Surely, heaven is our destination. Our human nature will be taken up to heaven with the Ascension of the Lord.

        Jesus contrasts present sorrows with future glory. Probably, we cannot avoid pain and sorrow if we wish to follow Jesus to the Cross. But, in the Cross of Jesus, surely, we will find freedom, victory, and joy.
        When Jesus departed physically from the Apostles, they were not left in sorrow or grief. Instead, they were filled with joy and with great anticipation for the coming of the Holy Spirit.

        While the Resurrection was the turning point in history regarding salvation, the Ascension was the turning point in history regarding the beginning of the Kingdom of God to us. So, what is emphasized here is that the disciples were ‘continually’ in the Jerusalem Temple with ‘great joy’ praising God. Now, we are witnesses of this Good News.

        The Ascension of the Lord was not a departure ceremony, but the beginning of a new way for the disciples to be part of Christ and His mission. Today, we also can be part of Christ and His mission. And, He promises us the future glory with Him in heaven.

        God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, will be with us now and forever.