



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 24, 2020

**ARCHBISHOP GOMEZ DELIVERS HOMILY TODAY CALLING ON CATHOLICS
TO UNITE TO CARE FOR EACH OTHER DURING THIS TIME OF CRISIS**

*--Parishes are Called to Hold Drive-Through Food Drives and Display Blessed Sacrament for
Adoration Next Weekend to Celebrate Pentecost Sunday --*

In his homily today, the Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord, Archbishop José H. Gomez calls on people of faith to turn to the Word of God in light of the pandemic, and reminded the faithful that although our circumstances are currently different the mission of the Church remains the same. Mass was livestreamed from the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels in downtown Los Angeles on <https://www.facebook.com/lacatholics/>.

“Our cities are beginning to open up again, and we are beginning to see all the sadness and damage that has been caused by this coronavirus pandemic and the shutdown of our economy. People’s lives have been turned upside down, they are suffering and grieving, and they are afraid,” said Archbishop Gomez during today’s homily. “I know this is the reality for many of us, right now. I am praying with you, we are all praying together in the Church, and we need to ask for the gift of strong faith in this moment.”

Yesterday, Archbishop Gomez provided a video message update to the people of faith in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles on the continued postponement of the celebration of public Mass and sacraments during the challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic (in [English](#) and [Spanish](#)).

“The Church is a family and right now we need to do everything we can to take care of our brothers and sisters. We need to love like Jesus Christ, every one of us,” said Archbishop Gomez in the homily. “We need to feed one another and shelter one another. We need to be there for one another, to help and to heal, and to hold one another. We are stronger together, better together.”

Archbishop Gomez has called on all parishes throughout the Archdiocese to hold food drives next weekend to celebrate Pentecost on Sunday, May 31, 2020. Parishes are being asked to also take advantage of this opportunity to present the Blessed Sacrament for adoration as the faithful drive through to drop off their donations.

In his closing remarks at the end of Mass today, Archbishop Gomez looked around the empty pews of the Cathedral and reiterated his desire, and that of all bishops and priests of the Archdiocese, to once again be reunited with the faithful in the celebration of Mass and the Sacraments in the churches of the Archdiocese.

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“We miss all of you here at our Cathedral and in our parishes in the Archdiocese,” said the Archbishop. “We all want to be back together in our parishes, and we are working really hard for that to happen very soon.... Let us keep praying for that.... But the main reason for not opening overnight is the protection of all of us.”

“I think it is important for all us of to be aware that this is a very dangerous illness, and we are making sure that everything is ok when we come back and celebrate the Eucharist together.”

Full text of the homily is below.

Homily – Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord (A)ⁱ

*Most Reverend José H. Gomez
Archbishop of Los Angeles*

*Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angeles
May 24, 2020*

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Today we are united with the first disciples in lifting our eyes up to heaven, as we witness the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This a very special moment in the life of the Church, our Lord is now seated at the right hand of the Father, and this is where he calls us to be.

As Jesus risen from the dead on Easter Sunday, now He goes up to heaven — in his humanity and in his divinity. Because he ascends to heaven, we have hope, humanity has hope — that we will rise, that one day heaven will be our home, too.

As he rises to heaven, Jesus gives his Church its mission on earth, as we heard in our Gospel today:

*Go ... and make disciples of all nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,
teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.*

Jesus did not come to create an institution, he came to create a family, the kingdom of God. Out of all the nations of the world, he wants to make one family, all of us children of God, baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity — Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

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And, my brothers and sisters — each one of us, has a part to play in building up that family here on earth. We have an amazing calling!

We all have the mission to go out and make disciples. We have this mission to go out and share the good news of Jesus and bring salvation to others.

Salvation comes from knowing Jesus. Everything changes when Jesus comes into our lives. He is light, he is truth, he is beauty. He is the only way to happiness and he wants everyone to know that.

Each of us is called to be a missionary disciple. That's what Jesus means today when he tells his disciples, "*You will be my witnesses ... to the ends of the earth.*"

Of course, all these beautiful truths sound different today, as we hear the Word of God in light of this awful pandemic we are living through. But our mission is still the same — even though our circumstances are different.

Our cities are beginning to open up again, and we are beginning to see all the sadness and damage that has been caused by this coronavirus pandemic and the shutdown of our economy. People's lives have been turned upside down, they are suffering and grieving and they are afraid.

I know this is the reality for many of us, right now. I am praying with you, we are all praying together in the Church, and we need to ask for the gift of strong faith in this moment. Christ has risen and we will rise!

Jesus goes to heaven, but he does not leave us alone on earth. He goes away, but he does not leave us behind.

We have his promise today in the Gospel: "*Behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.*"

He is with us. Always. So, my brothers and sisters, we need to draw near to Jesus, we need to cling to him and follow him.

No matter what we have lost in this pandemic, nothing will ever take God away from us. Nothing can ever separate us from his love. Never give in to sadness! Now more than ever, let's ask for the grace to be witnesses to God's love in our lives.

In the first reading today, we hear Jesus tell his disciples "*not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise*" of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost.

This is a message to the Church in every age. And it is especially a message to the Church right now, in this hour when so many people are suffering.

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And we all know what the first Christians did after Jesus was lifted up into heaven. They did what Jesus told them to do.

They went back to Jerusalem with Mary his Mother and they devoted themselves to praying together and waiting for the gift of the Holy Spirit that he promised to them.ⁱⁱ

This is how the Church has always lived. This is how we need to live right now. Close to Jesus, close to Mary, united in the Holy Spirit who is always there to help us.

My brothers and sisters, we need to stay together. We need to pray together united as one family, one body.

St. Paul tells us today in the second reading that the Church is Christ's body on earth and that he is the head.

If Christ is our head, that means we should always be striving to have the mind of Christ — to think like Christ and act like Christ; to see the world as he sees the world, to love one another as he loves us.ⁱⁱⁱ

The Church is a family and right now we need to do everything we can to take care of our brothers and sisters. We need to love like Jesus Christ, every one of us.

We need to feed one another and shelter one another. We need to be there for one another, to help and to heal, and to hold one another. We are stronger together, better together.

So my dear brothers and sisters, today we are witnesses to what St. Paul calls "*the surpassing greatness of his power for us who believe.*"

Jesus came down from heaven to share in our human life, in all our sufferings and joys. Today he ascends into heaven so that we can follow him. Every road leads now to heaven, if we walk with Jesus who goes with us. So let us keep walking with him.

And this week, as we await the giving of the Spirit on Pentecost Sunday, let us ask the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of the Church, to obtain every grace for us.

May she help us to carry out the mission entrusted to us — to be missionary disciples in this hour, living for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

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ⁱ Readings: Acts 1:1–11; Ps. 47:2–3, 6–9; Eph. 1:17–23; Matt. 28:16–20.

ⁱⁱ Acts 1:12–14.

ⁱⁱⁱ 1 Cor. 1:10; 2:16.