



When you woke us this morning what was your mission? I am sure that sounds like a kind of strange question, but I believe each of us has a list of things and desires that we want to do and accomplish each day, each week, over the course of months and even years. Some of the goals we have are very practical, routine and repetitious. Other goals may be sought less frequently and some may never be accomplished. So, when I woke up this morning, I had the immediate mission of dressing, washing, and getting to some coffee and breakfast. No matter how many things I have on mind to do, I rarely, if ever, forget to eat. I then think about what assignments do I have for the day: daily mass, a wake to attend, someone to visit, what meetings am it attend, work on the bulletin, watch the Mets, read a book. There are times when a visit to the doctor is on the list, to go and see a certain movie that I have heard about, buy something I think I need, or go to lunch with a friend.

Still there are other missions I have that perhaps should be more immediate but I have put them further back on the list such as write or call a friend with whom I have not been in contact with for a while, a visit my family in Brooklyn, make a spiritual retreat, say the rosary more, forgive someone that I am upset with, go to confession, clean out my closet of clothes I do not need.

I sure you would have your own list of immediate things to do and then there would be other concerns that you want to address but may put on the back burner. I have often heard of *the honey do list*: which is list that a wife may give to her husband on a Saturday morning. But let me push the question a little bit further: what is our purpose beyond all these doings? That may well bring you to a response such as; *Father, I live in the real world. I should work to have money. I must shop to have good on the table. I have to do laundry and clean the house. I have to raise my children as well as I can. I seek to make sure they are healthy and that they have the opportunity for a good education.* Fair enough! But let us keep pushing the question. Why do I do all these things? I suppose many of us would answer that we want to be happy. We want to

share our lives with family and friends. Despite our struggles and challenges, we love the life that God has given us and we want to enjoy it.

Now, I think we are getting closer to the heart of the matter. What is my purpose in life? Those of us on the other side of sixty certainly learned an answer to that question in the first or second grade in catechism class. We were asked the question: *why did God make us*. We knew the answer as well as we knew our names: *God made us to know him, to love him, and to serve him in this life and to be happy with him in the next*. This response is a perfect answer to the question of our purpose in life. Notice it does not say our goal is to be happy in life. The goal of life is to know, love and serve God. Granted living those verbs of knowing, loving and serving will bring us, as a by-product true happiness, but happiness is not the first goal of love. It is to love the God who first loved us. It is to know that our destination in life is to someday be home with God in heaven. Most of us are not in a hurry to reach that goal, but it is an inescapable truth that we will one day return to the God who made us. Amid the thousands of things that each one of us do during our daily living, this is the foundation that lies behind all our activities. Certainly, to stay focused on this vision is not easy during our day to day living.

Today, on the feast of the Ascension, we that mark the fulfillment of the mission of Jesus Christ on earth that was prophesized in the *Old Testament* and brought into life at the Annunciation to the Blessed Mother and his birth at Bethlehem. He proclaimed the message of his Father to us: *For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. He gave us the path to eternal life by his teaching and preaching, opened the door to eternal life for us by his death on the cross and his resurrection from the dead.*

But Jesus will be faithful to his promise to not leave us orphans. He leaves us the gift of himself in the Holy Eucharist. He promises to send us the Holy Spirit to be with us until the end of time. Last Sunday we heard this promise from Jesus: *I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— the Spirit of truth*. We most dramatically experienced the fulfillment of the first Pentecost. Next Sunday, we will again celebrate the ongoing presence of God in our daily lives as we rejoice in Pentecost Sunday. Jesus gives each one of us, as his disciples, the mission to make him present through the Holy Spirit in the Church. In the last words Jesus speaks to us while he is on earth, He gives the mission, the ultimate purpose of the worldwide Catholic Church, of the diocese of Rockville Centre, the parish of St. Martin of Tours, every ministry in our parish, and every individual parishioner:

*"All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me.
Go, therefore, 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.
And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.*