



OUR LADY OF MERCY CHURCH
BOCA GRANDE, FLORIDA

OUR LADY OF MERCY PARISH

Boca Grande, Florida

Father Jerome A. Carosella, Pastor

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Mass Schedule:

Daily (except Saturday)	8:00 A.M.
Saturday Vigil	5:00 P.M.
Sunday	9:00 & 10:30 A.M.
Confessions: Saturday	4:15 to 4:45

Online Giving <https://dioceseofvenice.org/ways-to-give/parish-donations-online/>

ASCENSION OF THE LORD

May 21, 2023

THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD

The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority 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, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.' The Ascension marks the beginning of the time of the Church. The solemn language of today's gospel reading marks it clearly. The institution is already beginning to take shape: baptism is the rite of initiation into it, in some such way as marriage is the initiation of family. The Church of this gospel reading is the Church here below, made up of human beings, mandated to teach, to preach and to initiate new members through baptism.

There is a contrasting image of Church in the second reading, Ephesians 1:17-23. There Paul tells the same story: "God... raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places." But the angle of view is different. The Church that is born of this event seems purely inner and spiritual, without apostles, without baptism, without institutions. This Church is the Body of Christ, waiting here below, striving to come to perfection, member by member, so as to be like its Head and to follow him into glory and become "one body and one spirit" with him.

Are there two Churches, then, or perhaps two visions of Church? The Vatican II document on the Church (Lumen Gentium), is clear: "The society structured with hierarchical elements and the mystical Body of Christ – the visible society and the spiritual community, the earthly Church and the Church endowed with heavenly riches – are not to be thought of as two realities. On the contrary, they form one complete reality which comes together from a combination of human and divine elements" (no. 8). It is sometimes hard work to hold the two together, especially today when many are disillusioned by the scandals within the organisation. But battered and broken though it is, the Church has not been abandoned by Christ. St Augustine wrote, "Just as he did not abandon heaven when he came among us, he does not abandon us when he returns there. He is raised above the heavens, yet he suffers all the anguish that we, the members of his body, suffer." "He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross" (1 Peter 2:24).