

## Sunday 13 May 2018: The Ascension of the Lord



*The Lord Jesus was taken into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God*

Jesus is not abandoning his friends. On the contrary, he tells them to look forward to 'what the Father has promised'. When they are 'baptised with the Holy Spirit' – the Spirit who is the very expression of the life he shares with the Father – he will be with them in all that they are called to be and do. The Lord's new presence will fill with new life the Church which is about to be launched forth on its mission - to bring the power and blessings of the Lord's Paschal Mystery 'to the ends of the earth' (Luke), 'to all creation' (Mark).

According to the Gospel of Luke the angels tell the disciples not to seek the Lord 'in the sky', but to take up the mission they have received, to be his 'witnesses' throughout their world. The era of the pilgrim Church that is about to begin – the angels tell them - will end when Jesus returns, and the Church's life in faith and sacraments gives way to the absolute fulfilment of the final Kingdom...

Extract by John Thornhill sm - read more at [The Emmaus Series](#) | Image courtesy of [Herman oleon Clipart](#)

## May 15: World Families Day

The theme of World Families Day this year concerns the role of families in promoting peaceful and inclusive societies. In referring to inclusive societies the chosen theme shows awareness that public discussion of families is sometimes controversial. It can be seen to exclude other forms of relationship by implying that a real family must include a husband, wife and children.

Questions about the composition of families are important. But by placing families in the context of peaceful and inclusive societies Families Day reminds us that our preoccupation with defining family life is a relative luxury that few in the world can afford. The sight of refugee families herded in camps as they flee from persecution and killing in their own nations brings home the

challenges that so many families face. A closer look at the faces of refugees in camps, too brings home to us the burden and anxiety that mothers bear in caring for children in conditions where there is no security nor any assurance of food, shelter and medical care. If the faces of few fathers can be seen it is not because they have deserted their families. They may be dead, imprisoned or conscripted.

The theme of world families day also reminds us that peace is not given to millions of families around the world; nor are the societies both from which and to which they have fled inclusive. The survival of men, women and children can depend on the colour of their skin, their tribe or their religion. If people in such conditions think of a peaceful and inclusive society in which their families can flourish, they don't see their prayer as idealistic. They pray for it desperately as a condition of their survival.

In all cultures families are the foundation on which the future of society is built. They keep children safe and prepare them to live fruitfully in society. That is why in our society it is so important to focus on families as people with names who are joined together in raising children. We hold in our imaginations the actual children, mothers and fathers in our society rather than an abstract picture of an ideal family.

At Jesuit Social Services we have no other option. So many of the young people we serve have grown up in dysfunctional families in which they may not have felt safe or loved. We know that to care for families in our society we must attend to the conditions under which they live, and to ensure that they have resources that will support them in raising children as loving and trusting human beings. This requires a strong investment by society in its families to ensure its own future.

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