

Homily — Ascension 2019 (B)
By Rev. Bob Schramm, OSFS

One time when my mom was in her mid-80s
I drove her to Springfield, Ill. so we could be at
my youngest niece's wedding.
At one point in our trip to Springfield Mom pointed out to me
an expressway exit where she once had car trouble.
It happened right after my dad had died,
more than 10 years before.
Mom was all alone and she said she had the car in cruise.
At one point when she put her foot on the brake,
the car suddenly lost power.
The gas pedal simply wouldn't work.
However she discovered somehow
that if she engaged the cruise again the car would accelerate.
So, she was able to nurse the car off the freeway to a Holiday Inn
by taking it in and out of cruise.
The people at the Holiday Inn were wonderful to her.
They called "Triple A," and Triple A had the car fixed within a half hour.

Back now to my trip with Mom to Springfield
and her telling me this story.
She went on to say that as soon as she noticed the car
was losing power that day,
she started asking my dad for help.
She said that she was convinced that it was my dad
who got her through the whole thing.
She said she was sure it was Dad
who showed her this trick of putting the car in and out of cruise.
She also thought it was Dad who got her to these Holiday Inn people
who were so good to her.

This celebration of the Lord's Ascension is a promise
that loss and absence and separation
have been turned into **real presence**.
This Jesus, who once lived in a tiny corner of planet Earth called Israel,
now fills every nook and cranny and heart in the world.

Our ears echo with his voice when we listen to the readings at Mass.
We take his body and blood into our body and blood in Communion.
Through the Spirit we accept his whole self
as it settles into us and into others around us.

The real presence now abides forever in our midst,
urging us, gently nudging us to say yes to love.

He says,
"This is my command, that you love one another as I have loved you."
The "others" he insists that we love "as I have loved you"
are not limited to the persons around us in this room.
That love must reach, as he insists, to the ends of the Earth.

This Ascension Feast is the assurance that his presence
is no longer confined
to one moment in history or one place on the planet.
Whenever we gather to listen to the Scriptures
and break the bread and share the cup,
his presence with us is assured.
And he sends us out to "proclaim the Gospel to every creature."
He sends us to proclaim God's Good News in words, yes,
but most of all in deeds!
He sends us with the assurance that if we are aware,
we will discover his real presence
in the most unlikely places and people.

Here's a possibility for action:
Michigan "Poor People's Campaign:
A National Call for Moral Revival" 40 days of action
Week of May 14
Women / Youth / Disabled / Children / Right To Education.

So who was whispering those things in my mother's heart
that day more than 10 years ago?
Was it Jesus or was it my dad?

I'd simply say, "Yes, it was."

We go now to break bread together and share from the cup.
May our prayer over that food become an assurance
that the Jesus who is in heaven
surrounded by all the holy ones who have gone before us
is also **really** and **truly present** with us
each step of life's journey.

And so are they.