

Homily – Ascension C 2019
by Rev. Bob Schramm, OSFS

I believe that the Scriptures were written down to help folks like us
live what they say.

It's as simple as that: to help ordinary folks like us live what they say.

Every week in preparing for Sunday Mass, I spend a good deal of time
writing short introductions for the first two readings.

I do that in the hope that those introductions will help people do two things:

1. not check out, not go somewhere else, not zone out,
as soon after the reader announces: "A reading from . . .
2. to help those of us listening to realize we have a place in the story.
St. Paul is writing not just to the Ephesians, the Galatians, the Corinthians
a couple thousand years ago, but to us right here this morning.

Now I was thinking about the introductions I wrote
for today's readings in light of all that.

Concerning the reading from the Acts of the Apostles, I said that
the purpose of the Ascension story, and the whole Book of Acts, is
"to instill in us all the passion that characterized the first disciples."
Then about the reading from St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians, I said,
"St. Paul was on fire with the Gospel message,"
and may Paul's "burning desire inspire us, too."

PASSION, BURNING DESIRE

That can sound pretty out of reach . . .

Unless, of course you're a teenager who's just fallen in love for the first time,

I don't know about you, but most of the time it feels like I muddle along
from one thing to another in life
and don't feel a whole lot of passion and burning desire
about a lot of stuff.

What might passion and burning desire look like in our day-to-day living?
What are you deeply motivated about?
What keeps you deeply committed, energized over the long run?
What has staying power?

It seems to me passion and burning desire
are not so much inner-directed as outer-directed;
not just about having a cozy relationship with Jesus.
It's about having a committed, motivated relationship
with who and what Jesus loves, cares deeply for.

The Ascension story says in bold print that
there is no longer a gap between above and below,
between heaven and Earth.
God has and is sharing God's all with us

We're all unimaginably holy, brilliant, powerful, special,
each in our own unique way.

Ask yourself, "What is my passion? What do I have a burning desire about?"

Then live it.

SFS –Be who you are and be that well.

Back to where we began –
I believe that the Scriptures were written down to help folks like us
live what they say.
to live into our passion, into our burning desire.

Nothing is more practical than finding God,
that is, than falling in Love
in a quite absolute, final way.
What you are in love with,
what seizes your imagination,

will affect everything.
It will decide
what will get you out of bed in the morning;
what you do with your evenings;
how you spend your weekends;
what you read, whom you know;
what breaks your heart;
and what amazes you with joy and gratitude.
Fall in love, stay in love,
and it will decide everything.

Pedro Arrupe, SJ