

“YOU ASCEND WITHOUT ABANDONING US . . .”

After Christ’s Resurrection, it is documented by the Scriptures that He appeared to His Apostles on numerous occasions, preparing them for the great challenge that awaited them: spreading His Gospel throughout the world. On the 40th day after His triumphant victory over death, our Saviour climbed the Mount of Olives with His beloved followers and gave them their final instruction: “Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” Jesus then blessed them and ascended into the sky before their very eyes!

St. John Chrysostom writes of the significance of this event in one of his famous Homilies. “Today the human race is completely reconciled with God. Today, we, too, become heirs to the kingdom of heaven, even though we are not even worthy to live on Earth.”

Yes, the Feast of the Ascension of our Lord makes thoughts of heaven very real for all of us. Our life on earth is merely a “preface” to the “book” of eternal life. Each day of our life here should find us observing all that Christ has commanded us to do! In His own words, the Lord returned to His heavenly home “to prepare a place for us.” One of the verses from the Vespers for this glorious Feast clearly tells us the underlying reason for Christ’s departure from our midst: “The Lord ascended into Heaven so that He could send the Comforter into the world.” By doing this, His promise is fulfilled throughout eternity: Lo, I am with you always.