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**FOR THE WEEKEND OF MAY 15-16, 2021**

Ascension Sunday

**Gospel reading for Vigil (Lectionary 58)**

Mk 16:15-20

Jesus said to his disciples:  
“Go into the whole world  
and proclaim the gospel to every creature.  
Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved;  
whoever does not believe will be condemned.  
These signs will accompany those who believe:  
in my name they will drive out demons,  
they will speak new languages.  
They will pick up serpents with their hands,  
and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not harm them.  
They will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.

So then the Lord Jesus, after he spoke to them,  
was taken up into heaven  
and took his seat the right hand of God.  
But they went forth and preached everywhere,  
while the Lord worked with them  
and confirmed the word through accompanying signs.

**Homily helper / connection to stewardship / giving / charity / almsgiving**

* Where are the “signs” today?
  + Seems like the miraculous is absent from modern life, compared to Biblical times
  + Maybe more people would believe if we could heal people at a touch
* But Christ’s love is truly miraculous, and produces incredible signs even today
  + What ails us most today are not always threats to the body or to our physical health; we live in a very advanced society
  + The greatest threats today are to our soul. Our sense of self. Our identity and our purpose.
    - Depression, anxiety, aimlessness, these are greater threats today than poison and snakes. Therefore, watch for the signs in yourself in those around you and take action.
  + Christian love, the truth that we’re made in the image and likeness of God, and that our worth and value rest upon the infinite and total love of the Father, produces “signs” today, such as incredible conversion stories of atheists and non-believers who find rest and purpose in God
* Confident, ultimately, because the Lord is still working
  + Though He ascended into heaven, His Spirit continues to work with the apostles and their successors
  + And He continues to affirm the word through the powerful and miraculous signs needed by the people of our day
* We can continue that mission today
  + Supporting our parish through the Annual Diocesan Appeal helps us preach the Gospel

**Intercession**

That, through supporting our Annual Diocesan Appeal, we might strengthen our ability to proclaim the Gospel to every creature.

**Copy for bulletin announcement**

We’ve got quite a tall task: going out into the world and proclaiming the Gospel to every living creature. We’re reminded today, on Ascension Sunday, that even though Christ ascended body and soul into Heaven, He still aids the work of the Church today. And our mission is impossible without His grace!

Christ wants us to rely upon Him. But this doesn’t necessarily mean depending on miracles and signs. It also means trusting that he’ll bless our more practical efforts to build the Church and proclaim the Gospel.

Here at [parish], we’ve discerned that the Annual Diocesan Appeal is a vital way of helping us live out our mission. We depend on God’s grace, not only to see this important endeavor through to completion, but to inspire each of us to do our part. Let’s pray as a parish community that we all might be moved by the Lord to contribute to this mission, the same one He originally entrusted to the Apostles.

**Copy for pulpit announcement**

We’ve been entrusted with quite a mission: proclaiming the Gospel to all the world. One practical tool that helps our parish do this is the Annual Diocesan Appeal. Please prayerfully consider how you can contribute.

**Social media post/content**

Photo: Parishioners at Mass.

Text: “Go into the whole world  
and proclaim the gospel to every creature.”

Copy: Help us live out our mission! Support the Annual Diocesan Appeal.