



Seventh Sunday of Easter/Ascension

I almost never get to talk about today's gospel reading. I'm so glad I finally have the chance to tell you the greatest news you've ever heard. Here it is: YOU ARE ALREADY IN HEAVEN.

Now, at this moment in history that may seem like very bad news indeed, as in *Seriously? Heaven is being stuck in the house all day and night, terrified of a horrible virus? If this is heaven, what's hell?*

Well, you make a point. It doesn't seem like heaven, except for the most important fact about your life: **you know Jesus**. *Now this is eternal life, that they should know you, the only true God, and the one whom you sent, Jesus Christ* (Jn. 17:3).

if you were an infant on the day of your baptism, your Godparents answered those all-important questions for you: Do you believe in God? Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his Son? They answered YES for you, and your life's task has been, with all your heart, to answer YES on your own.

It's in that YES that eternal life begins right here on earth. That YES lifts the believers up into that realm that holds them, through sickness, and loss, and grief, and even pandemics. *I can do all things in Christ, who strengthens me* (Phil. 4:13), says the one whose YES has taken him or her into eternal life right here on earth.

The one who **knows Jesus** already has a taste of heaven. That does not mean that we are immune from the terrors of this life. It means that holding fast to Jesus anchors us to Him whose comfort and healing is a foretaste of the next.

How has knowing Jesus throughout your life lifted you up?