

- There is a beautiful expression that says “home is where the heart is.” The meaning, of course, is that a home is not simply an address to which our mail is sent. A home is not simply a house we happen to occupy.
- Our home is a place that is endearing to us. It is a place that is special to us. And most importantly, our home is the place where we feel a sense of belonging.
- One of the beautiful blessings of my life is that my parents still live in the home I grew up in, and it is built on property in Indiana that has been in my family for decades.
- There is a certain joy that I feel every time I begin the journey home to visit, which I try to do a few times a year. When I make it home, I am always greeted by a sense of comfort and peace.
- Never do I sleep better than when I am at home in my old bed. Never do I eat better than when I am at home being fed by Mom. And never am I filled with such warm and happy memories of my family and our friends than when I am home.
- My home provides me with a sense of rootedness; it is part of who I am. And I suspect that’s true for many of us, for the places and the people who form our homes help to shape us and mold us into the people we are.
- As much as any of us may love our homes, as Christians we know our true home is in Heaven! And today’s feast of the Ascension reminds us that it is toward Heaven that our lives must be ordered and directed.
- In fact our whole life on earth should be undertaken and lived with the acute understanding that we are on a journey home. Our lives here on earth are not meaningless. They have a purpose, and therefore they should not be lived thoughtlessly or in vain.
- Specifically, our Lord’s Ascension reminds us that we should live our lives as if we want to go to Heaven! We must prepare for Heaven!
- As many of you know, on Thursday night I offered a *Missa Cantata* here at St. Ann’s – a sung Latin Mass. One of the most poignant parts of that liturgy takes place at the very beginning.
- After processing in wearing a cope and sprinkling everyone present with Holy Water, the priest then changes into a chasuble and prays at the foot of the altar before entering into the sanctuary of the church.
- The symbolism is that we must be properly prepared and attired with holiness before entering into Heaven. While salvation is a free gift that comes from God, we must be prepared for it.
- You see, in His Passion and death on the cross on Good Friday, Jesus redeemed us, and therefore made salvation a possibility for us.
- In rising from the dead on Easter Sunday, and by appearing afterwards, our Lord showed us that death does not have to have power over us! Our Lord has truly conquered sin and death.
- While it is true that we will all one day die, for those of us who believe in the Lord and love Him, we will rise again if we have repented of our sins and seek to live according to His will.
- And now 40 days later as Jesus ascends body and soul into Heaven, He shows us that Heaven is not some philosophical abstraction. Heaven is not a dream or a fairy tale!
- The Ascension of our Lord shows us that Heaven is real! And this feast reminds us that Jesus has returned to Heaven in order to prepare a place for us, so that when we die, we might be with Him for all eternity!

- For as I alluded to earlier, our homes are not just physical places. Our homes consist of those whom we love. And the same is true of Heaven!
- Heaven is not simply a place, my friends. As our Holy Father has written, Heaven is a Person: Jesus Christ! And when we go home to Heaven, we go as our Lord's children to be eternally united with Him!
- In his letter to the Ephesians, St. Paul writes: "May the eyes of your hearts be enlightened, that you may know what is the hope that belongs to His call, what are the riches of glory in His inheritance among the holy ones, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power for us who believe." It's a magnificent and very hope-filled passage!
- When we were baptized, we became children of God, co-heirs with Christ. And thus, His inheritance is now our inheritance too.
- Therefore, we should be filled with the hope of eternal glory as we witness the greatness of our Lord's power in His Ascension.
- Moreover, we should bear it constantly in mind that we have actually been created for Heaven! We belong there, and it is God's will for each person to eventually go to Heaven.
- Yet He does not force Heaven on us. We must choose Heaven by preparing ourselves for it while we live here on earth rather than just presume that God will save us.
- And the way that we prepare for eternal union with our Lord in Heaven is by living in union with Him now: through prayer, through the sacraments, and through the Mass. We unite ourselves with the Lord now by uniting ourselves to His holy will in humble obedience.
- My dear friends in Christ, today we witness our savior ascending into Heaven to prepare a place for us. He goes to prepare a place for us within Himself.
- As we set our sights in hope on our heavenly home, let us resolve to live our lives here on earth in complete union with Jesus Christ so that upon our death, we can be assured of being united with Him for all eternity.