

## 2019 ASCENSION SUNDAY

I love life and continually give God thanks for the joy of my being.

I love strolling along Midway Beach, with the sound of the surf, gazing out upon the beauty of Young Nick's Head with the mighty Pacific Ocean to its left, reaching far away to South America.

I love celebrating Mass; especially with parishioners who are on fire for the Lord.

I enjoy reading the paper on my i-pad over a leisurely cup of morning tea with a gentle sun warming my back.

I love being invited to homes for meals and sharing in family talk as we enjoy delicious food together.

I totally enjoyed watching the Chiefs humble the Crusaders last night!

I love the quiet half hour at the end of the day winding down before going to bed, saying a little prayer and then gently lulling to sleep with a prayer of thanksgiving in my heart.

You who have spouses, children or Grandchildren will have even greater reasons for joy in living.

But my joy, like yours, is tempered by the knowledge that nothing lasts forever. I am getting older. I am forgetting things. I haven't the strength or the energy of ten years ago. I dread the thought of terminal illness and the possibility of having a stroke; of not being able to speak; of not being able to occupy my mind with interesting things. I know that my wonderful life is not forever.

But I have a glorious hope. I sense that God, Whose very nature is to seek out communion and friendship with every one of us, is continually reaching out to me inviting me to dance with Him. I have a sure promise of life with God in heaven- of dancing with God and all the angels and Saints- and it is to be anticipated with enormous expectancy.

The Ascension of Jesus assures all of us that when we pass into eternity and behold Jesus, we will behold a human Person. Jesus, the Son of God, God's very Self, ascended into heaven with a resurrected human body. The Ascension gives us the comfort that Jesus will not be a vague, vapoury, dream-like Being. The Jesus Who will embrace us, God very Self, will also be a human person.

Central to our Faith is our belief that after the Last Day we will have resurrected bodies; bodies which will no longer be subject to such earthly limitations as old age, sickness or pain. We will have been transfigured. Our

minds will no longer be clouded. Our ability to remember and to comprehend will no longer be limited by the fragility of our brain cells. And most gloriously of all, our ability to love will no longer be thwarted by any inclination to selfishness. Our love will be pure, generous and unlimited. We will be surrounded by love. What a hope this is!

And so we can embrace life with thanksgiving and look forward to death with joyful anticipation.

This is reflected by St Paul in our Second Reading when he wrote: “May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ enlighten the eyes of your mind so that you can see what hope His call holds for you, what rich glories He has promised that we will inherit.” Yes, we have a magnificent hope.

Human despair will always be at war with Christian hope. It is natural to be appalled by the prospect of physical deterioration and death. But the person of Faith will understand that even old age does have an up-side. These declining years give us an opportunity to share in the suffering and death of Christ. We are able to enter into the Paschal dynamic; uniting our sufferings with those of Christ on the Cross, bringing resurrection and new life to all of Creation but especially to our families.

Christ has gone before us into His Kingdom. Where He has gone we will follow.

When we come into His Kingdom, we will be greeted by One Who is not only truly God but One who is also fully human, our Brother, our Spouse, our Best Friend. And joy will radiate through our being because we will know ourselves to be loved by One whose love is as vast as the Universe.

On this Feast of the Ascension let us celebrate God’s invitation to dance- opening our hearts to the joy of life; life not only here on Earth- but also with the Lord in heaven where along with all the angels and saints we will join in a joyous, whirling cosmic dance.

We can be certain of one thing- it won’t be boring! It will be great!