

*“When they saw him, they worshiped, but they doubted.”* How human that line is – and how it captures our spirits sometimes – at least it captures mine. . . . Yes, we believe. Yes, we know and feel Jesus working in our lives. Yes, we pray, we worship, we love one another as He asked us to do. But then. . . . but then. . . . we still have our doubts. In our first reading from the Acts of the Apostles, we hear how the apostles watched as Jesus was “lifted up, and a cloud took him from their sight.”

St. Matthew’s gospel, the Gospel we mostly read from this year --- does not have such an account of the Ascension – but as the gospel comes to a close – the disciples are called by Jesus to a mountain. No doubt they went there eagerly – wanting to see the risen Lord once again –to talk with their mentor and friend. They see him – they worship him – and then they – still had their doubts. . . . And how does Jesus react to that doubt?

Not with disappointment. Not with correction. Not with more teaching. . . . No, Jesus reacts with an incredible and inexhaustible LOVE for his disciples. He looks on them with love – then sends them out to continue doing his work. He is not going to wait for his disciples – and not going to wait for us ----- ----to become perfect – he sends us all out --- doubts, fears, failings, warts and all --- telling us: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations: baptizing them!”

Jesus is not angry. He is not disappointed. He is not discouraged: he simply sends us as we are.

Now maybe at this moment of sending – our moment of commissioning: our doubt and fear may increase, rather than decrease -- as we start wondering what all of this means. . . how are we supposed to do this? Make disciples of all nations? – what kind of impossible task is that? Where do we start? What if we are rejected? Can we really do this? It's then that his last words spoken on earth according to Matthew's Gospel need to drift down upon us: "I am with you always, until the end of the age."

We need to let those words settle into our souls, feel them, and be reassured by them. We need to turn them over and over again in our hearts & believe them ---

*Always ..... until the end of the age..... I will be with you. . .*

And for now, for the moment, we set our doubts and fears aside -- and we go out and do the ministry Jesus has entrusted to us.