

Commentary on the Gospel for Wed, Nov 30th -0001

We often harbor the illusion that if only we were able to see the Risen Jesus with our own eyes, we would be firm believers. The brief gospel account of the Lord's Ascension should cause us to pause. As the Eleven gather on the mountain in Galilee and catch sight of Jesus, the gospel relates: "When they saw him, they worshiped, but they doubted." They actually see him, they know he is alive, yet their faith is not as firm as we might have imagined!

How striking, then, are St. Paul's words in his Letter to the Ephesians when he prays: "May the eyes of your hearts be enlightened, that you may know what is the hope that belongs to his call. . . ." St. Paul reveals that there is a different kind of seeing, leading to a deeper kind of knowing. The inner heart has "eyes" that see, a gift of the "Spirit of wisdom and revelation." These eyes give sure knowledge of the hope that is ours, the hope of sharing in the glory that is our destiny.

We who live in the post-Pentecost times have all been enlightened through that one Holy Spirit. We possess the new eyes and the certain hope that the Eleven had yet to discover when they gathered on the mountain top. Are we aware that all of us already possess these inner eyes? If so, are we exercising those inner eyes or have they become atrophied? Do we claim the hope that is ours? On this Ascension Day, let us make St. Paul's prayer our own: Lord God, enlighten the eyes of our hearts, that we may know the hope that is ours!

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