

The Ascension

Today is Thursday the 21 May, the feast of the Ascension.

The monks of Glenstal Abbey sing Viri Galilei: "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky?"

Today's reading is from the letter to the Ephesians.

Ephesians 1:17-23

I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Where or what are the 'eyes of our heart'? It seems an odd expression, but the suggestion here is that there's a seeing that's done deep within, an instinctive or intuitive understanding of God's gift within us. If my heart had eyes, what would it see? Maybe I would see life, people around me, the whole world differently. Maybe it's about a shift of perspective... How would reality look if I saw it with God's eyes?

The word 'power' is repeated four times here. Have I ever felt God's power at work in my life? The author speaks of God's power at work in Christ, 'far above all rule and authority and power and dominion'. Do I believe this?

How does that power above all other powers manifest itself? Today's feast of the Ascension sees Jesus telling his disciples, 'I am with you always'. He says that for me, here and now. What do I want to say to him or ask of him?

As we hear the reading repeated, what words strike me? What would I want to say to Jesus about experiencing God's power in my life?

In these days many people are feeling powerless, unable to exercise their normal control over their lives. Do I have a sense of God's power, shining through human fragility? I talk to the Lord about this now, as one friend speaks to another.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.