

He ascended into Heaven

A man by the name of Arnold Toynbee worked for many years on his monumental history of the world. Near the end of this epic work, he wrote one highly significant paragraph. 'When I began this work, I found myself looking at a great parade of marchers through history. But as the work progressed, the marchers all fell, one by one, by the wayside. And now, only one marcher remains, growing larger and larger with each step.' That marcher is Jesus Christ.

If you remember, Dan Brown's book, the DaVinci Code, was selling like hot cakes at this time a few years ago. In the book he did his utmost to sow seeds of doubt over the person of Jesus. But, contrary to what Brown had in mind, his plan seems to have backfired. People are showing renewed interest in the person of Jesus. You cannot out-fox the Lord - He can even use his enemies to achieve His purpose.

One of the claims of the Da Vinci code is that Jesus is not God but only a man and that it was the Emperor Constantine who deified him in the fourth century. But today's second reading, written centuries before Constantine, says that God has made Jesus Lord of all Creation. Lord, is a divine title for Jesus. The main aim of Dan Brown's book was to unsettle our faith in Christ's divinity. But he wasn't the first to try his hand at it. Arius tried it in the 4th century and almost succeeded. Even in the gospel the opponents of Jesus couldn't stomach the fact that Jesus claimed to be God. At his trial they said: 'he is only a man and is claiming to be God.' Who does He claim to be?

The Ascension of Jesus asserts His divinity. If He had not ascended, he would have been limited by time and space and His divinity somewhat obscured and curtailed.

For our part, however, we need to acknowledge Him as our Lord and confidently place our lives and destinies into His hands. But do we? For instance, some people are always fretting about the future. In entrusting our worries into His hands we make Him Lord of our future. If your past casts a dark shadow over your life, entrust it to Him for healing and release. Make Him Lord of your past. Time itself is His precious gift to us - let us not waste it or fritter it away in idle pursuits. Make Him Lord of your time. When making important decisions invite Him to be Lord of your choices so that you'll make the right one.

If Jesus is not God, as the DaVinci Code maintains, then the last thing we would want to do is hand control of our lives over to Him - a mere mortal. But Jesus is both God and man.

The feast of the Ascension proclaims Jesus as Lord of all. There is a tendency among many of our contemporaries to place man at the centre of everything and push God to the sidelines. After Jesus had ascended, the apostles were gazing into the sky. Let our gaze be fixed on Him as we invite Him to become master of every aspect of our lives. Only in this way can we be sure of sharing His glory in Heaven.

QUESTIONS

1. It is the Catholic Church which has kept alive the memory of Jesus throughout the centuries by writing the Scriptures and celebrating the Mass. Why do the secularists like Dan Brown keep harping on about contentious issues such as the Inquisition, (there was more people savagely guillotined in a fortnight during the French Revolution than in a hundred years of the Inquisition) or the misuse of indulgences prior to the Reformation.?
2. Have we any difficulties in believing that Jesus was God as well as Man?
3. If Jesus was not God, He would not have the power to save us from Death and Hell and reconcile us with the Father, thereby making us justified. Discuss
4. Do the group think that the reason why people push God out of their lives is that man wants to be his own saviour? Could this be the same reason some people arbitrarily pick and choose their own moral criteria more often than not without reference to God or His Church. Discuss.
5. Is making Jesus Lord of our past, present and future easier said than done?