

Catholic Parish of Lindfield-Killara

Diocese of Broken Bay

SOLEMNITY OF THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD SEVENTH SUNDAY IN THE SEASON OF EASTER 24 – 5 – 20

'The season of glad song has come' (Song of Songs 2:12)

*This week: Acts 1:1-11; Eph 1:17-23; Mt 28:16-20
Next week: Acts 2:1-11; 1 Cor 12:3-7, 12-13; Jn 20:19-23*

While Easter Sunday and Pentecost Sunday clearly speak of the *presence* of Jesus and his power in our lives, the feast of the Ascension seems to speak instead of absence: Jesus leaves his disciples, he leaves the world - they feel bereft of his presence.

But the Ascension is very much an Easter feast. It is integrally a part of the Easter Season, and its meaning for our lives can only be understood in reference to Easter itself:

The risen Jesus is no longer *physically* present in the world which challenges us to consider *how* he *is* present. The Ascension, as it were asks us 'to look elsewhere':

The risen Jesus is no longer *physically* present in the world, but he is present:

in the depths of our prayer and contemplation;

in the person who needs our love, our forgiveness, our compassion

in the person who is judged, condemned, and shunned;

in ourselves in our times of pain, of vulnerability, of rejection and dejection.

When seen with Easter eyes, when seen as an Easter feast, the Ascension is not about the departure of Jesus but rather about his *arrival*.

Fr Colin





Did you know
youth@lindfieldkillara
has a website?

lindfieldkillarayouth@weebly.com

ZOOM meetings for teens & young adults
Online challenges for all ages
Links to other sites
Opportunities for community service
Private blog page for group discussion

A LITTLE NOTE ABOUT OUR NEW 'MASSES WITH TEN PEOPLE':

We can now confirm that you're welcome to book to come to Mass **once every week** as we have enough Masses to accommodate all those seeking to come.

Also, if you would actually like to come *more than* once weekly please let Alison know (alison@lindfieldkillara.org.au) or call the Parish Office—Alison will then keep you on a standby list in the event that a Mass is not fully booked.

Please see page 3 for more details about these Masses.

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY :

Ecumenical Service this Tuesday

This week between Ascension and Pentecost is observed nationally as The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Let's make our own prayer – *and action* – to be focused on reflecting the unity for which Jesus prayed for his disciples at the Last Supper. **One very concrete way to do that is by coming along in prayer and fraternal support to our local online Ecumenical Service this Tuesday evening :**

Each year at this time we have an Ecumenical service with our fellow local Christian Churches. Let's not allow the current situation divide us from one another:

Our Ecumenical Service will take place this Tuesday 26th May at 7:45pm .

Please take part by logging in as follows:

1. Enter the following address in your internet browser:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87864469376?pwd=d3p4WUJ6R1NNYVUvcTJXaXNnSnk4UT09>

2. When and if requested enter the following:

Meeting ID: 878 6446 9376

Password: 623841

This login information can also be accessed on our parish website under 'Our Parish' → 'Ecumenism'

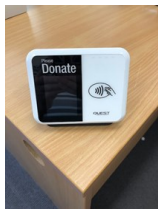
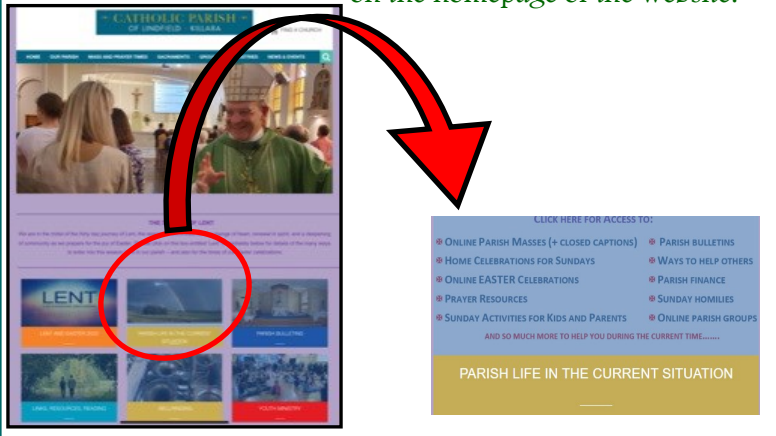


PLEASE be there online! *Fr Colin*

OUR PARISH LIFE ONLINE

2

Please keep visiting the special part of our parish website (www.lindfieldkillara.org.au) where we keep expanding the resources for you online: Mass in our parish, helps for prayer, home Sunday liturgies, helps for leading the kids through a Sunday reflection and much much more. All accessible through the hotlink box 'Parish Life in the Current Situation' on the homepage of the website:



TAP AND GO is accessible again. The two machines (one for the First and one for the Second Collection) **are now back in Lindfield church:** and are accessible when the church is open (see opening times further down on this page).

CONGRATULATIONS to John and Leah Quirk of our parish who celebrate their 67th anniversary of marriage this coming Saturday 30th May!



FEAST OF OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS

This feast day of Our Lady, under the title by which she is co-patron saint of Australia (St Mary of the Cross MacKillop being the other) falls on 24th May but as this coincides with a Sunday this year the feast will be celebrated this Monday 25th May. There are two Masses available for bookings that day.

NEXT SUNDAY is the great Easter feast of Pentecost, celebrating the fruit of the Resurrection—outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the birth of the Church.



◆ Please don't forget that there are a number of resources for helping your children celebrate on Sundays and to reflect on the Scripture readings. These can be found in the special section of our parish website 'Parish Life in the Current Situation'.

◆ The Parish Office is continuing to operate, though only one staff member is there at a time—the rest of the staff are working from home. For public health it's not possible to visit the office so please make contact by phone or email and the staff will assist you. **The Parish Office is functioning from Tues-Fri.**

CHARITABLE WORKS FUND



Many many thanks to several parishioners who covered the remaining shortfall of \$680 for the current appeal—we have achieved our quota! A wonderful thing in the current circumstances. Thank you to you all over the last financial year for your support of CWF.

Tomorrow is the feast of Ascension. To those who wonder what it's about: It's the day when Jesus started to work from home.



THIS WEEK'S LETTER FROM OUR BISHOP ANTHONY RANDAZZO

Bishop Anthony's letter for this week of Easter can be found via the link box on the special page for the current situation on our website.

Fr Colin's recent email letter to the parish is also available there—if you didn't receive it please let Fr Colin know your email address.

OUR CHURCHES

ARE ONCE AGAIN OPEN FOR PRAYER

Following the NSW Government's announcing of the first phase of the easing of restrictions our churches can now be re-opened for personal prayer—though the restriction remains in force of a maximum of ten people at any one time and maintaining a distance of a minimum of 1.5 metres from other people. Hand sanitiser will be available in the foyer—please use it upon entering and leaving the church.

The opening hours for our churches will be:

	Killara	Lindfield
Mon.:	11am - 4pm	Closed
Tues.:	11am - 4pm	1 - 4pm
Wed.:	Closed	1pm - 4pm
Thur.:	11am - 4pm	9:45am - 4pm
Fri.:	9am - 4pm	11am - 4pm
Sat.:	1pm - 4pm	1pm - 4pm
Sun.:	11am - 4pm	11am - 4pm

EVEN IN TIMES OF PANDEMIC THE REPAIRS MUST GO ON!

You will remember that in the storms some months ago Lindfield church suffered considerable water damage. The internal damage was covered by our insurance but not the *cause* of the problem—which was gaps in the internal wall cavity around the very high windows in the great south wall which allowed water to pour into St Brigid's Hall, the sanctuary and the sacristy. These repairs (borne at the parish's cost) took place last week and this photo shows where the 90 year old problem lay.



Come to Mass!

Because of the limitation on numbers for our gatherings for Mass our parish Sunday Mass will remain an online celebration at this time.

However we hope that you also will take the opportunity now available to also come to the actual physical celebration of the Eucharist in each of our churches, to gather with (a small part of) our community and to share in the precious gift of Holy Communion. We are making these available from Mon-Sat.

So that we may comply with the restriction of a maximum of ten people it is necessary to make a booking to attend Mass. **To do this please go the special hotlink box on the homepage of our parish website. Please be sure to read all the instructions before booking.**

At this stage our weekly Mass roster will be: **Mon** - 10am and 7pm at Killara; **Tues** - 10am at Killara; 12 noon at Lindfield; **Wed**: 10am and 12 noon at Lindfield; **Thur** - 10am at Killara and 7:00pm at Lindfield; **Fri** - 10am at Lindfield; 7pm at Killara; **Sat**: 10am & 12 noon at Killara.

Keeping in mind the restriction that four square metres at a minimum should be kept for each person, we will mark the pews which are able to be used for Mass to ensure maximum separation of those participating. Hand sanitiser will be provided at the doors for use upon entry and departure.

There will of course be no physical sharing of the Sign of Peace at Mass and in our parish Holy Communion will not be given on the tongue—this is a conscientious decision by Fr Thomas and myself for the sake of our own health and the health of the community.

There will also be boxes available in the church for contributions to the First and Second Collection & at Lindfield the Tap & Go machines will also be available.

It's wonderful that we can at least from time to time now come together as smaller parts of our community to celebrate the Eucharist together. Fr Thomas and I look forward to being with you at these precious gatherings.
Fr Colin

GETTING TO KNOW THE WONDERFUL JULIAN OF NORWICH

....PART 2

Oneing

The place which Jesus takes in our soul he will nevermore vacate, for in us is his home of homes, and it is the greatest delight for him to dwell there. . . . And the soul who contemplates this is made like [the one] who is contemplated. —Julian of Norwich

On that day, you will know that you are in me and I am in you. —John 14:20

“That day” promised in John’s Gospel has been a long time in coming, yet it has been the enduring message of every great religion in history. It is the Perennial Tradition. Divine and thus universal union is still the core message and promise—the whole goal and the entire point of all religion.

Lady Julian of Norwich uses the idea of “oneing” to describe divine union. In chapter 53 of Revelations of Divine Love, she writes, “This beloved soul was preciousy knitted to God in its making, by a knot so subtle and so mighty that it is oned in God. In this oneing, it is made endlessly holy. Furthermore, God wants us to know that all the souls which will be saved in heaven without end are knit in this knot, and oned in this oneing, and made holy in this holiness.” [1]

Julian observes, “If I pay special attention to myself, I am nothing at all; but in general, I am, I hope, in the unity of love . . . for it is in this oneing that the life of all people consists” . . . [2] She reflects: “The love of God creates in us such a oneing that when it is truly seen, no person can separate themselves from another.” [3] Finally, let us hear

Julian in her own Middle English words, speaking of divine and human unity: “For in the sighte of God alle man is one man, and one man is alle man.”[4]

This is not some 21st-century leap of logic. This is not pantheism or mere “New Age” optimism. This is the whole point! Radical union is the recurring experience of the saints and mystics of all religions. We do not have to discover or prove it; we only have to retrieve what has been re-discovered—and enjoyed, again and again—by those who desire and seek God and love. When you think you have “discovered” it, you will be just like Jacob “when he awoke from his sleep” and shouted, “You were here all the time, and I never knew it!” (Genesis 28:16).

As John states in his first Letter, “I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, I am writing to you here because you know it already”! (1 John 2:21; my emphasis). Like John, I can only convince you of spiritual things because your soul already knows what is true, and that is why I believe and trust Julian’s showings, too. For the mystics, there is only one Knower, and we just participate in that One Spirit.

[1] *Julian of Norwich, The Fourteenth Revelation, ch. 53 (Long Text).*

[2] *The First Revelation, ch. 9 (Long Text), Colledge and Walsh, 191.*

[3] *The Fifteenth Revelation, ch. 65 (Long Text), ibid., 309.* [4] *The Fourteenth Revelation, ch. 51 (Long text), The Writings of Julian of Norwich: A Vision Showed to a Devout Woman and A Revelation of Love, eds. Nicholas Watson and Jacqueline Jenkins (Pennsylvania State University Press: 2006), 279.*

(to be continued)

We're here, we're online:
and here are some ways to join in ONLINE parish gatherings.....

These linkups take place using Zoom – the organisers will simply send you an email which provides you with a link to click on at the appropriate time, along with a 'Meeting ID' and a password which you enter when requested. Then off you go.

I. OUR PARISH CHRISTIAN MEDITATION GROUP is now gathering **online** and invites anyone to join them for a short time of prayer **each Wednesday at 8am.**

If you haven't tried Christian meditation before don't worry – our lovely group will help you to get introduced to this gentle way of praying.

If you'd like to join the group please email either Kay (Kay.Hunt@optusnet.com.au) or Catherine (catherinecwillis@gmail.com)

II. OUR PARISH SCRIPTURE STUDY SESSIONS

are also taking place online—both the daytime group and the evening group. If you're not already in either or both of these groups and would like to be please contact Fr Colin (94167195) or email (colin@lindfieldkillara.org.au).

- The daytime Scripture Group gathers online on the first & third Thursdays of each month at 11am. We are studying St Paul's Letter to the Romans.
- The evening Scripture study group gathers online on the second & fourth Wednesdays of each month at 7:30pm.

III. PARISH BOOK CLUB This year exploring the theme of Hope.

Meeting time: Last Wednesday of Month, 10:00—11.20 am.

The book for Wednesday 27th May is 'The Moment of Lift' by Melinda Gates.

If you'd like to be added to the email list receive details of how to take part in the online gatherings and to receive updates about further online gatherings in 2020 please contact either Catherine Willis (catherinecwillis@gmail.com) or Elizabeth Reedy (elizabethreedy@msn.com).

IV. YOUTH: Please see page 3 for details of an another online gathering for FUSION YOUTH—our high school youth group—today Sunday 17th May, and for details of fun online activities for BLAST (Years 3-6).

V. SUNDAY MORNING TEA ONLINE: sadly, due to lack of patronage, this will **no longer continue.**

VI. CATHOLICISM: A FAITH DEVELOPMENT COURSE a renowned audio-visual faith development course coming from the legendary Fr (now Bishop) Robert Barron on the **first and third Wednesdays** of the month at **7:30pm** via Zoom . If you'd like to join in our parish online sessions contact Fr Colin for details.

VII. YOUNG ADULTS ('J-WALK') are gathering online for a fun evening online every few weeks.

IF YOU NEED HELP in learning how to take part online in any of these activities please call (9416 7195) or email (colin@lindfieldkillara.org.au) Fr Colin and he'll be happy to help you to master the technology (it's not hard at all!).

WOULD YOU LIKE A CHAT?

Things can get stressful or lonely during the current social restrictions.

We have a number of parishioners who are happy to phone and have a chat.

If you'd like to arrange to have someone call please call 9416 3702 Monday-Sunday (leave a message if the phone isn't answered and we'll get back to you) or email alison@lindfieldkillara.org.au



The Parish Office is continuing to operate, though only one staff member is there at a time—the rest of the staff are working from home. For public health it's not possible to visit the office so please make contact by phone or email and the staff will assist you. The Parish Office is functioning from Tues-Fri.



As disciples let's lead the way in helping protect public health and save lives. Download the CovidSafe app so that as social restrictions slowly are changed we can help to keep our communities safe.

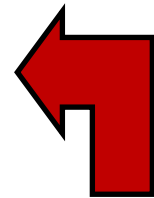
THANK YOU

to the parishioner who has covered the cost of purchasing the software to take the bookings for our twelve weekly 'Masses with ten people'.

Some of this week's parish online gatherings on Zoom



THE YOUNG ADULTS GROUP had its third online catchup last Sunday evening. Pictured here are some of those who took part.



OUR DAYTIME SCRIPTURE STUDY GROUP also met during the week, though we had a few people unable to join in this week.

耶穌升天節 (節日) 24.5.2020

讀經一 (耶穌就在門徒觀望中, 被舉上升。)

恭讀宗徒大事錄 1:1-11

德教斐羅, 我在第一部書中, 已論及耶穌所行所教的一切, 直到他藉聖神, 囑咐了所選的宗徒之後, 被接去的那一天為止。他受難以後, 用了許多憑據, 向他們顯明自己還活著, 四十天之久, 顯現給他們, 講論天主國的事。

耶穌與他們一起進食時, 吩咐他們不要離開耶路撒冷, 但要等候父的恩許, 說: 「你們聽我所說過的, 若翰固然以水施了洗, 但不多幾天以後, 你們要因聖神受洗。」

他們聚集的時候, 就問耶穌說: 「主, 現在就要給以色列復國嗎?」耶穌回答說: 「父以自己的權柄, 所定的時間和日期, 不是你們應當知道的; 但當聖神降臨於你們身上時, 你們將充滿聖神的德能, 要在耶路撒冷, 及全猶太和撒瑪黎雅, 並直到地極, 為我作證人。」

耶穌說完這些話, 就在他們觀望中, 被舉上升; 有一朵雲彩接了他去, 離開他們的眼界。

他們向天注視著他上升的時候, 忽然, 有兩個穿白衣的人, 站在他們面前, 向他們說: 「加里肋亞人! 你們為什麼站著望天呢? 這位離開你們, 被接到天上去的耶穌, 你們看見他怎樣升了天, 也要怎樣降來。」——上主的話。(默想片刻)

答唱詠 詠47:2-3, 6-7, 8-9

【答】: 天主上升, 有歡呼之聲護送; 上主騰空, 有號角之聲相從。(詠47:6)

領: 萬民, 你們要鼓掌歡騰, 也要向天主歡呼慶祝。因上主至大至尊, 可敬可畏; 他是統治宇宙的偉大君王。【答】

領: 天主上升, 有歡呼之聲護送; 上主騰空, 有號角之聲相從。你們應歌頌, 歌頌我們的天主; 你們應歌頌, 歌頌我們的君王。【答】

領: 因為天主是普世的君王, 你們都應該以詩歌讚揚。天主為王, 統治萬國; 天主登上神聖的寶座。【答】

讀經二 (天主使基督在天上坐在自己的右邊。)

恭讀聖保祿宗徒致厄弗所人書 1:17-23
弟兄姊妹們:

願我們的主耶穌基督的天主, 即那光榮的父, 把智慧和啟示的神恩, 賜與你們, 好使你們認識他。並願他光照你們心靈的眼目, 為叫你們認清: 他的寵召, 有什麼希望; 在聖徒中, 他嗣業的光榮, 是怎樣豐厚; 他對我們相信的人, 所施展強而有效的德能, 是怎樣偉大。正如他已將這德能, 施展在基督身上, 使他從死者中復活, 叫他在天上, 坐在自己右邊, 超乎一切率領者、掌權者、異能者、宰制者, 以及一切現世及來世, 可稱呼的名號以上。

天主又將萬有置於他腳下, 使他在教會內做至高的元首; 這教會就是基督的身體, 是基督在一切內, 充滿一切的圓滿。——上主的話。(默想片刻)

福音前歡呼

領: 亞肋路亞。

眾: 亞肋路亞。

領: 主說: 你們要去使萬民成為門徒; 我同你們天天在一起, 直到今世的終結。(瑪28:19,20)

眾: 亞肋路亞。

福音 (天上地下的一切權柄, 都交给了我。)

恭讀聖瑪竇福音 28:16-20

那時候, 十一個門徒就往加里肋亞, 到耶穌給他們所指定的山上。他們一看見耶穌, 就朝拜了他, 雖然有人還心中疑惑。

耶穌於是上前對他們說: 「天上地下的一切權柄, 都交给了我, 所以, 你們要去使萬民成為門徒, 因父及子及聖神之名, 給他們授洗, 教訓他們遵守我所吩咐你們的一切。」

「看! 我同你們天天在一起, 直到今世的終結。」——上主的話。

(講道後默想片刻)

華人天主教會 北區中心主日彌撒12時-
牧職修女 司徒金-美修女 0419- 426899
中心聯絡 Gloria Cheung ☎0416-118089

JUNIOR WORDSEARCH

Jesus is given all authority in heaven and earth

Z L A M O U N T A I N D P B B
K H U H X I H P Y O F M M I R
K Q T E N D W J Y Y T E C J Y
Q D H U M E D G X P R H W E U
M N O X H O J N K C E T O K X
N P R U N A T I O N S D R J C
C X I Y Q S F C S N Z P S B Y
E Q T D O U B T E D H Q H O J
T I Y G A L I L E E C O I I Z
U J T U L C P L W C K M P X J
P F L Y I X C Z S R Q L E H E
X H E A V E N D E Q A B D W M
E V E R Y T H I N G E A R T H
E N A E C H B E E L E V E N G
N N Z F T E A C H T H O N G W

Try to find these words:

Galilee
authority
doubted
earth
eleven
end
everything
heaven
mountain
nations
teach
worshiped

What's happening in our online parish?

MAY

Sunday 24th	On demand	Parish Mass online (The Ascension)
Tuesday 26th	7:45pm	Pentecost Ecumenical Service Login details on page 1.
Wednesday 27th	8:00am	Meditation Group See p. 4
	10:00am	Parish Book Group See p.4
	7:30pm	Evening Scripture Group See p.4
Thursday 28th	7:30pm	Re-scheduled Session 2 of 'Catholicism' See p.4
Sunday 31st	On demand	Parish Mass online (Pentecost)

JUNE

Wednesday 3rd	8:00am	Meditation Group See p. 4
	7:30pm	Catholicism ~ Session 3 See p.4

Catholic Parish of Lindfield -Killara

Fr Colin Blayney, Parish Priest
colin@lindfieldkillara.org.au 9416 7195
 Fr Thomas Alackakunnel VC, Asst Priest
thomas@lindfieldkillara.org.au; 0421 406162

Parish Office

Parish Office Hours: Tue-Fri 9.30 am -4pm
 Postal address: PO Box 22, Lindfield NSW 2070
 Phone: 9416 3702
 Email: parish@lindfieldkillara.org.au
 Parish Website: www.lindfieldkillara.org.au

Parish Staff

Parish Secretary:
 Philita Marundan philita@lindfieldkillara.org.au
Parish Office Coordinator
Child Protection Coordinator:
 Alison Williams (M,W,Th only)
alison@lindfieldkillara.org.au
Sacramental Programme Team:
 Maia Schulze
Tsangsacramental@lindfieldkillara.org.au
Parish Facilities' Coordinator (volunteer) :
 Anthony Cassidy: anthony@lindfieldkillara.org.au
Youth Ministry Coordinator (volunteer)
 Jean Shatek: youth@lindfieldkillara.org.au

Parish School

Holy Family School: 4 Highfield Rd, Lindfield 2070
 Principal: Mr Lou Dogao Phone: 9416 7200
 Email: info@holyfamily.nsw.edu.au
 School Website: www.hfldbb.catholic.edu.au

Could you help us to improve our parish records?

As we face these times which will continue to restrict our gathering together as a community for some time it's more important than ever for us to have our parish records as accurate as possible.

One area in which our records are deficient is with regard to dates of birth. This helps is to contact various groups within the parish—for instance for Mothers' Day we wanted to deliver a card to all our senior mums but our parish data system could only produce a list of those for whom a date of birth had been entered. Similarly youth activities require us to be able to contact families of our young people.

To help us overcome this deficiency in some of our records it would be helpful if you could provide us with dates of birth for all in your household to be entered into our data system—in accord with our parish privacy policy this would only be for parish use.

All you need to do is send an email (or a regular letter) to the Parish Office (parish@lindfieldkillara.org.au) with the Christian names and surnames of each member of your household along with their dates of birth.

This will just take a couple of minutes—please do it now before you forget!

Fr Colin

Lord, in Jesus your Son, you restored to us the gift of everlasting life. Grant that life to:

Recently deceased: John Yun, Jack Biviano (brother of Mary Lo Ricco of our parish), Angela Ying Fung Yim, Patrick Fitzpatrick, Joyce Antelman, Jean Groves, John Cashman, Julie Wright, Maria Ciong KN, Joyce Murphy, Eleanor Villenor Quema,

PLEASE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ARE SICK:

Nicholas Sutherland, Jesse Langford, Anthony Ellison, Ron Burke, Nena Umali, Wolfgang Liers, Cyril Ferriere, Alex Noble, William Wise, Lise Therese Ferriere, Ian Coffey, Maureen Hobbs, Russell Adams.

And for all those affected by COVID-19.

"The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them. When they saw him, they worshiped, but they doubted. (Mt 28:16)

**PAINFUL GOODBYES
AND THE ASCENSION**

Among the deeper mysteries in life perhaps the one we struggle with most is the mystery of the Ascension. It's not so much that we misunderstand it, we simply don't understand it.

What is the Ascension?

Historically it was an event within the life of Jesus and the early church and is now a feast-day for Christians, one that links Easter to Pentecost. But it is more than an historical event, it is at the same time a theology, a spirituality, and an insight into life that we need to understand to better sort out the paradoxical interplay between life and death, presence and absence, love and loss.

The Ascension names and highlights a paradox that lies deep at the center of life, namely, that we all reach a point in life in which we can give our presence deeply only by going away. So that others can receive the full blessing of our spirits.

What does that mean?

When Jesus was preparing to leave this earth he kept repeating the words:

It is better for you that I go away! You will be sad now, but your sadness will turn to joy. If I don't go away you will be unable to receive my spirit. Don't cling to me, I must ascend. (John 16:7ff)

Why is it better sometimes that we go away?

Any parent with grown children has heard similar words from their children, unspoken perhaps but there nonetheless. When young people leave home to go to college or to begin life on their own, what they are really saying to their parents is:

Mom and dad, it is better that I go away. You will be sad now, but your sadness will turn to joy. If I don't go, I will always be your little boy or little girl but I will be unable to give you my life as an adult. So please don't cling to the child you once had or you will never be able to receive my adulthood. I need to go away now so that our love can come to full bloom."

The pain in this kind of letting go is often excruciating, as parents know, but to refuse is to truncate life.

The same is true for the mystery of death. For example: I was 22 years old when in the space of four months both of my parents, still young, died. For my siblings and me the pain was searing. Initially we were nearly overwhelmed with a sense of being orphaned, abandoned, of losing a vital life-connection (that, ironically, we had mostly taken for granted until then). And our feelings were mainly cold.

There's little that's warm in death.

But time is a great healer. After a while, and for me this took several years, the coldness disappeared and my parents' deaths were no longer a painful thing. I felt again their presence, now as a warm, nurturing spirit that was with me all time. The coldness of death turned into warmth. They had gone away but now they could give me their love and blessing in a way that they never could fully while they were alive. Their going away eventually created a deeper and purer presence.

The mystery of love and intimacy contains that paradox: to remain present to someone we love we have to sometimes be absent, in ways big and small. In the paradox of love, we can only fully bless each other when we go away. That is why most of us only "get" the blessing our loved ones were for us after they die. Mystically, "blood and water" (cleansing and the deep permission to live without guilt) flow from their dead bodies, just as these flowed from Jesus' dead body.

And this is even true, perhaps particularly so, in cases where our loved ones were difficult characters who struggled for peace or to bless anyone in this life. Death washes clean and releases the spirit and, even in the case of people who struggled to love, we can after their deaths receive their blessing in way we never could while they were alive. Like Jesus, they could only give us their real presence by going away.

"It is better for you that I go away!" These are painful words most of the time, from a young child leaving her mother for a day to go to school, to the man leaving his family for a week to go on a business trip, to the young man moving out of his family's house to begin life on his own, to a loved one saying goodbye in death. Separation hurts, goodbyes bring painful tears, and death of every kind wrenches the heart.

But that is part of the mystery of love. Eventually we all reach a point where what is best for everyone is that we go away so that we can give our spirit. The gift of our lives can only be fully received after we ascend.

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