

**The Reflection from Pastor Fr. John
Carlos, Holy Cross Church, Harrison, NJ,
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JESUS, PRESENT!



The Ascension of Jesus seemed to mark the day when Jesus left his disciples.

However, it would be a mistake to mark Jesus “absent.” The last thing he told his disciples was “And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:20)

Jesus promised to remain with his disciples. That is a promise that he has kept and continues to keep to this very day.

Jesus is with us when the Church gathers in prayer, as he told us, “For where two or three are

gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” (Matthew 18:20)

Jesus is present as his Gospel is proclaimed. After we listen to the reading, we declare, “Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.” We praise the one who has just spoken to us.

Jesus is present in the consecrated bread and wine that we receive in holy communion. They are not reminders of the Lord who was with his Apostles 2,000 years ago. Rather they are the Body and Blood of Christ who is truly with us. As Catholics, we believe in the “real presence.”

Jesus is present in the celebration of all the sacraments. It is Christ who acts through his priests to bless us with his grace, mercy, and love.

The Ascension is not about the Risen Lord leaving us, but rather about the Risen Lord remaining with us in a new and wonderful way. A way that allows him to be with us at every moment and in every place.

May the Risen Lord bless us with his presence and peace always,

Father John Carlos