

# A Mission Church

## PARTICIPATION IN PERFECTION: Making Known the Glory of God

Okay. Here's what we know by faith.

- We already share in the perfection that is of God because it is God's will.
- God's perfection is made known to us through the Holy Spirit.
- It is gift given to us at baptism – without our doing anything to deserve it.
- Our lives are brought to perfection through the offering – death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
- We, as members of the Body of Christ, are called to participate in the life of God.
- Our participation is fueled by the gifts of God's Spirit.
- Our participation comes from the commissioning first given to the Apostles.
- The commissioning is for us, to evangelize, that is, to make known the Kingdom of God where the love of God is made manifest by our very participation (showing) God's life coming forth from our own in various ways.
- Jesus' mission was to announce the Kingdom of God at hand – in and through himself:  
*From that time on, Jesus began to preach and say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Mt. 4:17).*
- His final message is the giving of his mission,

*"Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age." (Mt. 28:19-20).*

### SO, WHAT ARE WE MISSING?

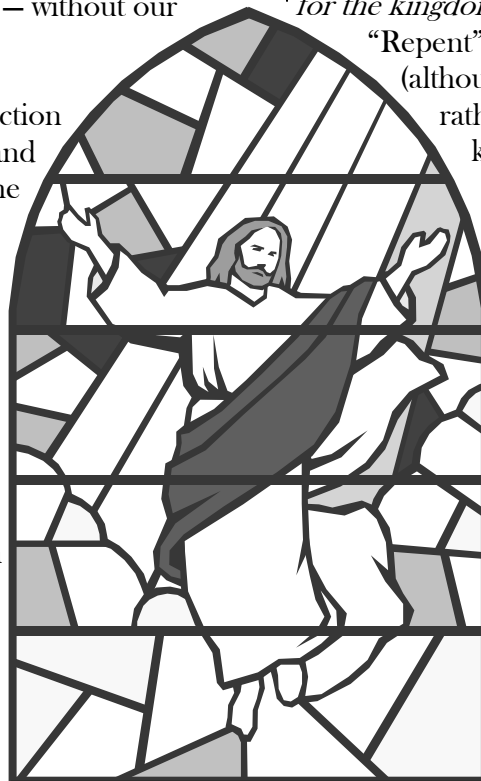
Perhaps it is how we read the first proclamation that we hear from Jesus in his public ministry: *"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."* For us,

"Repent" may not necessarily mean repent of sins (although it usually does for all of us), but rather repent of not acknowledging the kingdom of God in our own time, of not allowing the Spirit to move us, of keeping within ourselves the life of God meant to be shared, or of not participating first and foremost in the perfection that is ours as gift.

Perhaps we're missing the "YES" that needs to be given as a response to **GOD FIRST** in our lives – that we desire to enter into the ministry and mission of Jesus Christ.

So should we say "Participation in Perfection" or rather, "Moving with the Spirit of God?" or "Living in the Glory of God?" The perfection of God, even as we have not come to realize its fullness (and won't in this life), enables each of us to live the

mission (the life and purpose) of Jesus Christ. It would not have been given to us had it not been God's will and purpose. It is heightened each time we come and share in the Eucharist, that is, when we say "YES" to the presence of God joining us to the whole of the Body. With that is the subsequent acceptance of caring for the whole of the Body with the mind of Christ. It is Christ, as it were, emanating forth from us to those with whom we share life – always connected to the head of the Body, Christ.



**"Go... Teach... Sanctify"**

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## CHRIST ALIVE IN HIS BODY

Participation in perfection is our response to God rather than what is so often believed as God's response to us. **A MISSION CHURCH** is that faith community that responds to the whole, ready to offer itself for one member in need, one activity needing attention, one breath to maintain hope. It is the Body acting in union with Christ the head, that directs the Body. St. John writes in his first letter (1 Jn 5:9-11),

*And this is the testimony: God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever possesses the Son has life; whoever does not possess the Son of God does not have life."*

Our "possessing" the Son, is our acknowledging that we are members of his Body — alive. And without this possessing of Christ, as the one who breathes and moves in and through us, we are dead.

If we took the time to read the five short chapters of St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians, we would hear well of the unity that is necessary for our growth in perfection and as **A MISSION CHURCH**.

*"Rather, living the truth in love, we should grow in every way into him who is the head, Christ, from whom the whole body is joined and held together by every supporting ligament, with the proper functioning of each part, brings about the Body's growth and builds itself up in love."* (Eph. 4:15-16)

## THE EFFECT OF THE ASCENSION OF JESUS

St. Augustine's statement during an Ascension Day sermon are such joyful words to embrace.

*"For just as he (Jesus) remained with us even after his ascension, so we too are already in heaven with him, even though what is promise us has not yet been fulfilled in our bodies."*

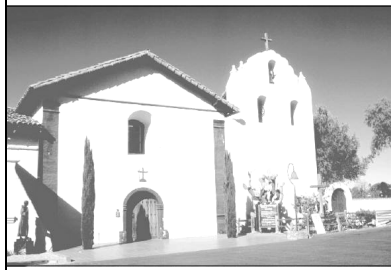
...and...

*"Why do we on earth not strive to find rest with him in heaven even now, through the faith, hope and love that unites us to him? While in heaven he is also with us; and we while on earth are with him. He is here with us by his divinity, his power and his love. We cannot be in heaven, as he is on earth, by divinity, but in him, we can be there by love."*

Individual acceptance of God working in and through our beings and personal lives, has a changing effect on the world around us and brings Christ's

mission — the love of God — alive for all to see. And we, as in the time of the apostles — gather around us a community of living faith (**A MISSION CHURCH**) which is spiritually set to reject the worldly attitudes of others in favor of the teachings of our Redeemer. So too is this possible in our workplace, and in the domestic Church, our homes.

In this, we and others are being brought again to the perfection in union with God through the intercession of Jesus Christ, and the love that pours



forth from the Father and Son through the Holy Spirit. No one can say, "I have the Holy Spirit," unless that person is ready to abandon all that is thought as a possession, all that an

individual thinks he/she is, and accepts completely the power of God directing all choices and actions. But **A MISSION CHURCH** rejoices in this opportunity, knowing that the fullness of the glory of God awaits it.

## NO VOLUNTEER WORK

Volunteer work just does not happen in the Body of Christ. Volunteers are never sought — only willing participants. Only one call is ever made to those sharing in the Body of Christ. It is given as gift at baptism when the life of our God comes to reside in the one receiving the power of the Holy Spirit. Baptism is a gift given by the head of the body, Jesus Christ. It is an invitation into participation in the life-giving actions of Jesus Christ and of **A MISSION CHURCH**. Due to this radical understanding, we are forever changed if our response is a "Yes". At this moment, what others may think they "have to do" becomes what we "earnestly desire to do" for the sake of the Body.

## JOY OF OWNERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITY

These replace the volunteer mentality of those whose lives are set to build up the Body in oneness with Christ. The beautiful fruit of living life in harmony with the Holy Spirit — JOY — replaces expectation. We are called to honor how we see our growth in union with the plan of God, loving others so they may see their own lives being directed to the Kingdom of God.

Pentecost nears. Let us anticipate our call to share the glory of God in the world!