

THE HOUR OF GLORIFICATION

The Ascension of the Lord
May 7, 1978

Acts 1:1-11
Ephesians 1:17-23
Matthew 28:16-20

My dear sisters and brothers.

The Liturgical Year that we follow and reflect upon Sunday after Sunday reaches its solemn culmination. Today we celebrate the feast of the Ascension of the Lord and next Sunday we will celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit. The work of Jesus that was announced at Christmas, the great mystery of God made man, that filled us with joy during the joyful days of Christmas and Epiphany, this mystery of the God-man who dies on the cross and is raised to new life for us was celebrated during the days of Lent and Easter and now again on this feast of the Ascension and then again on Pentecost, fifty days after Easter, the fullness of time, the time of Jubilee and hope, the coronation of Jesus' work --- this is the meaning of today's celebration

We participate in our Sunday celebration of the liturgy with a new spirit of encouragement that is derived from this source of our holiness, joy and profound happiness and that enables us to continue our journey through history. For this reason the one who preaches the homily must be careful to illuminate the concrete realities of history with this mystery of Christ, this eternal mystery of Christ. It is the preacher's obligation, often difficult, because this light of redemption that illuminates our path on earth many times must enlighten and confront very unpleasant realities. Yet the preacher must do this otherwise his words would not be the gospel that is light of the world and the guiding light for our next steps.

Events of the week

Therefore I am happy to speak about and place our reflections on the Word of God and the mysteries that we celebrate in the context of concrete events of the week. At times the reality is very agreeable --- but not always, for other times our reality clashes violently with the great plans of God's love. Our God wants our nation and our world to be a city that is enlightened by the civilization of love, an antechamber and a road that leads us to the destiny that is set before us in today's celebration of the feast of the Ascension of the Lord. Where have the people of the Archdiocese journeyed during this week?

Above all else I ask you to remember in this Mass and pray for our beloved Father Ladislao Segura. Last Sunday when I preached here, I was still unaware of the sad event of his sudden death in a room at the rectory of the Iglesia del Carmen in Santa Tecla. He spent every Saturday afternoon and evening at this house and religiously fulfilled the obligation of every religious, the obligation of a community life. The Jesuits, because of their work, often live alone but every week or every two weeks they have an obligation to come together in

one of their community houses. Father Segura was very faithful to this obligation. On Saturday afternoon he was with his brother Jesuits in the Iglesia del Carmen in Santa Tecla. Saturday evening he was preparing his homily for Sunday and studying. He was a man who was concerned about continually forming himself in the ecclesiastical sciences. At the time of his death his companions found on his desk preparatory documents for the meeting of bishops that will take place in Puebla and some homily notes for Sunday and for Labor Day. He died while he was working. As was said at his funeral: he was a beautiful symbol of a man at work.

I want to highlight three aspects of his life: a fisherman of vocations. Friday, on their radio program, the seminarians called him a fisherman of vocations. How many priests today and how many seminarians owe their vocation to the intervention of Father Segura who would speak with their families and their pastors after he had met with them and began to cultivate their priestly vocation! He was also very solicitous for religious life. The religious communities, especially the communities of women, found him to be very supportive and a worthy guide. The other aspect of his life that I want to highlight is his sound doctrine. He was a wonderful counselor of all those persons who approached him with theological and canonical concerns. With the prudence of a truly wise man he did not give an immediate response but took his time to study and consult others. In this way he was able to offer sound counsel and guidance to those who turned to him for doctrinal, canonical and moral support. May the Lord grant him eternal rest and I ask all of you to pray for him. I ask prayers especially from the community of Colonia Dolores where Father Segura, in addition to the meritorious characteristics that I have highlighted, served this section of our city as a true pastor.

Today, the universal Church celebrates World Communication Day. Unfortunately we have not been able to publicize this event as we would have liked but let me say a few words to call attention to all Catholics about the critical and rightful use of the media. These marvelous means of communication --- the newspapers, the radio, television, the movies --- where ideas are communicated to large masses of people, are often tools of confusion. These instruments, formers of public opinion, are often manipulated by material interests and thus become instruments to maintain an unjust state of affairs through falsehood and confusion. There is a lack of respect for one of the most sacred rights of the human person, the right to be well informed, the right to the truth. Each one must defend this right for himself and herself by being critical in using the media. Not everything in the newspapers, not everything in the movies or on television, not everything that is heard on the radio is true. Often it is just the opposite, a lie.

Therefore, critical people must know how to purify the means of communication so they are not poisoned with everything that falls into their hands. This is the type of awareness that the Church wants to awaken today as we celebrate World Communication Day. We want people to be able to read the newspapers critically; to be able to say *This is a lie! This is not the same thing that was said yesterday! This is a distortion because I have seen the opposite!* One of the necessary characteristics today is this ability to be critical in the use of the media and the Church attempts to implant this critical conscience. It is precisely for this reason that the Church must confront some serious conflicts because dominant interests want to maintain the masses of people in a dreamlike world. They do not want people who are able to be critical and able to discern the difference between the truth and a lie. I believe that never before has there existed in the world, especially in our own environment, a struggle of death between the truth and the lie. Our actual conflict at this time could be stated in these terms: a

struggle between the truth and lies. Let us not forget that Jesus has said: *the truth will set you free* (a). Let us always search for the truth!

Saint Augustine used a phrase that I believe is very appropriate for these times: *credimus pos credere volumus*, that is, *with great pleasure we believe what we want to believe*. For this reason it becomes very difficult to believe the truth because many times we do not want to believe the truth, the truth disturbs our conscience. But even though the truth might disturb us, we must accept it and we must believe in it so that the Lord might always bless us with that freedom of those who love the truth and who do not sell the truth or our pens or voices or the media to the highest bidder for some financial gain or personal interest or some other materialistic reality. How sad it is to see that so many people have sold their words and so many voices on the radio earn their living by nourishing themselves on the slanderous words that they produce. Most often the truth will not produce money but only bitterness, yet it is better to be free with the truth than to have great wealth as a result of lies.

The celebration of Seminary Day is approaching and next Sunday, Pentecost, we will celebrate a day in honor of our young people. We have already announced the fact that this Saturday at 8:00pm we will celebrate the sacrament of Confirmation here in the Cathedral for the young men and women in our Archdiocese. There are about two hundred young men and women who, with a wonderful spirit, are preparing themselves to receive the sacrament of the Holy Spirit. I invite all the People of God to renew the commitment of this sacrament that we received as small children, a commitment that we may have been unaware of at that time but one that imposes on us a great responsibility and also provides us with the strength and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Therefore those of us who have received this sacrament will renew our commitment to defend our religion --- this is the reason why Confirmation is administered. These two hundred young men and women also provide us with an example of how people should prepare themselves to receive such an important sacrament. For this reason we have stated that when we begin the next liturgical year with the celebration of Advent the sacrament of Confirmation will no longer be administered to people under the age of fifteen. We do this so that people are aware of what they are receiving in this sacrament and are able to respond to this unique grace of the sacrament.

With joy I want to announce that beginning this Sunday, the first Sunday of May, at twelve noon we will pray the Angelus on our radio program. I invite all of you to listen to us on Radio YSAX, the Pan American Voice, so that together with your Pastor and united with the Holy Father who prays the Angelus every Sunday in Rome at noon, we might lift up our voices and greet the Virgin as we pray for the many needs of the Church. During the month of May, true Catholics ought to be characterized by this devotion to the Mother of the Church.

Thursday of this week, May 11th, marks the one year anniversary of the death of Father Alfonso Navarro and Luisito Torres in the convent of Miramonte where they were cruelly felled by bullets. We are preparing a concelebration that will take place here in the Cathedral on Thursday at noon. Since May 3rd a novena of Masses has been celebrated each night at 7:00pm in the Church of Colonia Miramonte.

I also have the joy of announcing to you that we have published a pamphlet of ninety-two pages entitled *Testimony*¹, which contains a biography of Father Navarro and describes the spirit that animated the priesthood of this young man who died at the time when his priesthood was truly flourishing. I invite you to come to know his life which is contained in

these pages because as you know there is a great desire to discredit the ministerial priesthood of Father Navarro as well as Father Grande, two great martyrs. Their martyrdom shows that they have been killed because others hate the faith. There is no doubt that these two priests were assassinated by criminal bullets because they had the courage to preach the truth and point out the sins of the world. Another interesting pamphlet² is being published about the life of Father Grande. This is being reproduced in the pages of *La Crónica del Pueblo*, a courageous newspaper that is honoring Father Grande by publishing the life of this true apostle of our Archdiocese.

I want you to know that it was a great joy for me to be able to spend yesterday with the people in the parish community of La Palma in the Department of Chalatenango. I shared this time with a community that is eager to know the thinking of God as it is reflected in the pages of the Bible and to make this teaching a part of their lives. This is a community that is making every effort to renew themselves. The church and the area surrounding the church was filled with people. Someone told me: *Look, the people have come from far away. They did not come in pick-up trucks, but have come on their own and they are very happy to spend the day here. They will keep this vigil until late at night. If you are able, please remain here for the vigil*, (unfortunately, I was not able to spend this time with them). *More people are coming and we will sing hymns that are inspired by the present reality of the Church's journey here in these scenic heights covered with pine trees, this area of La Palma in the northern part of Chalatenango.*

I want to congratulate Bishop Luis Chavez y Gonzalez who has been declared by our Assembly, and here I will cite the text of the statement: *a meritorious citizen of the Republic of El Salvador because of the outstanding services that he has given to the country.* Who could not rejoice with us in the triumph of our brother, especially, a distinguished predecessor for whom I have great respect and admiration! Precisely because I have such great love and admiration for him, I would have liked this homage to have been made from the purest of intentions. What is hidden beneath this honor? I would have liked an honor that was more logical in its origins because I am a witness of the tears and the sufferings of his final days as Archbishop. He told me: *Come quickly and take possession of this responsibility because this is a terrible situation!* Priests were being expelled from the country and no one would answer his phone calls. The final days of his time as Archbishop were very painful. For this reason I believe that the honor that is now bestowed upon him, if it is not a true act of reparation, then it lacks sincerity because those who honor him are not willing to accept the consequence of their action as they honor a man who courageously spoke about the social situation of our country. Therefore, our Catholic radio station, with the authorization of the Assembly, has begun to transmit the doctrine and pastoral guidelines of Archbishop Chavez that were greatly criticized but which are providing us with standards as we continue to move forward on the road that he has shown us. As I have said before, I have received all of this as a great inheritance and I will try to care for and cultivate this rich legacy. Therefore as the Assembly has declared this man a *meritorious citizen* I believe that the Legislature has also canonized his way of proceeding, his doctrine, his pastoral guidelines and in effect, have confirmed that paths that we are trying to follow, since these are the paths that he has given to us.

I also believe that it would be logical for the Assembly to clarify the petition for amnesty that a group of lawyers has presented. Also the Law of Public Order that has provided the security forces with the authorization to carry on so many abuses should be declared unconstitutional. This type of action would show that the Assembly is in accord with Bishop

Chavez who defended the poor and those who suffer. It would also be good if the Assembly would remember that the causes of the Archbishop's suffering are still a reality and therefore calling him a *meritorious citizen* should mean that they are willing to eliminate those realities that cause so many citizens, so many of his brothers and sisters, to suffer discrimination and so many other abuses.

This is the historical framework of our Church and of our society that now experiences Jesus in the time of his glorious triumph that is called the Ascension. I entitle my homily today with the words: the hour of glorification. Yes, today is the hour of Christ's glorification. On Holy Thursday, a short time before he died, Jesus prayed: *I glorified you on earth, Father, by accomplishing the work that you gave me to do. Now glorify me, Father, with you, with the glory that I had with you before the world began* (b). On Holy Thursday Jesus felt that the hour of his glorification had arrived. For Christ, the humiliating suffering that led him to the cross and his glorious resurrection and that led him to the place where he is seated at the right hand of the Father is the fulfillment of his glorification. His glorification is fulfilled in the Easter event when he leaves the sorrowful tomb, when the humiliating cross springs forth in the splendor of glory. Christians cannot forget that the glory of Christ is based on a painful and sorrowful event, the cross. Therefore, the Church's suffering and the pain of Christians always has a perspective of glory and hope. Let us not forget this. In light of today's readings I want to highlight three aspects of this glorification: (1) Christ is the glorification of God; (2) Christ is the glorification of humankind; (3) Christ is the glorification of the universe. Thus this feast of the Ascension of our Lord presents us with a beautifully profound and universal perspective.

Christ is the glorification of God

Let us look at and never cease to contemplate the figure that is presented to us in the gospel. As Jesus draws near to his disciples he tells them: *all power in heaven and on earth is given to me* (c). This first reading also describes this glorious moment in Christ's life: *As they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him from their sight* (d). This is the vision that we should not lose sight of today. My sisters and brothers, let us contemplate this vision! If we did nothing else but that which the apostles did --- look up and down from earth to heaven and repeat the words: *all power in heaven and on earth has been given to me* and watch Jesus ascend until he is seated at the right hand of the Father, then our lives would be marked this Sunday by moments of contemplation. There is nothing more beautiful than the glorified Christ. There is no more noble thought for the minds of humankind, no love that ennobles the hearts of men and women than the thoughts and the love that reside within this Son of Man in whom God dwells in all his fullness.

First of all I want to tell you that this Christ who ascends into heaven is the glory of the Father, the glory of God, the glory of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the second reading in which Saint Paul analyzes this glorification of Christ, invites us to pray: *ask God to give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation resulting in knowledge of him* (e). My sisters and brothers, with complete confidence I tell you this morning that when I lift up my voice to God in my poor prayer and when I speak with people who tell me that they pray for me, all I ask is that I might be an instrument of this revelation. I do not want to preach anything else but this knowledge of Christ, our Lord. If with this knowledge of Christ I have to illuminate the realities of my country, I do so knowing that our pilgrimage on this earth is not primary, rather what is more important is that the vision of Christ illuminates our pilgrimage on earth. This is most important and should never be lost sight of. Once again I call to the attention of

my radio audience, especially those persons who are listening to me investigating and watching if I will fall, I ask you to focus on the central points of my preaching and see whether I present the revelation of Christ which is my obligation and my responsibility. I must preach about Christ Jesus. Like Saint Paul I pray: *that you be given the spirit of wisdom and revelation resulting in knowledge of him so that you may know the surpassing greatness of his power which he worked in Christ, raising him from the dead and seating him in the heavens...putting all things beneath his feet* (f).

God is glorified in Christ. We will never have an exact idea of Christ as long as we do not understand that he is the One who incarnated the relationship with the heavenly Father and did what the Father asked him to do: he prayed often, gave thanks to the Father, and depended on the Father for everything. Therefore when the culminating moment arrived, when Jesus loosed himself from the bonds of poverty and sacrifice, God glorified him, raised him to new life and seated him at his right hand. *To sit at the right hand* is a biblical expression that shows that Jesus participates intimately in the power of God. (g) Thus we see that God is glorified in Christ just as Jesus had asked at the Last supper: *Now glorify me, Father, with you, with the glory that I had with you before the world began* (h). Before the world was created, Christ existed as God --- as a man he began to live in the womb of a woman, in the womb of the Virgin. But as Saint John says in his Prologue, *in the beginning was the Word* (i), in other words, Jesus, as God, existed from the beginning. This phrase of Saint John reveals to us Christ's eternal permanence: *he lived in the heart of God and is glorified in God*. If because of his love for humankind he clothed himself as a human person, then now at the time of the ascension this humanness is glorified, this body and soul that was created at the time of the incarnation in the womb of Mary is glorified. This man is clothed in the glory of the Son who lives eternally. *Glorify me, Father, with you, with the glory that I had with you before the world began* (j). The splendor of eternity clothes the body and soul of Christ with glory. There in heaven, at the right hand of the Father, sharing the power of God, there is a man with hands like ours, a head like ours, one who thinks like we think, a glorified man --- this is the mystery of the Ascension.

God has revealed his power in this man. The power of God is to see Christ crucified for this is the power of love. As Jesus comes forth from the tomb and overcomes his enemies we see the power of God that overcomes. As Jesus ascends and is glorified and made the depository of God's power, this Christ is the glory of the Father. Christ is the glory of the divinity, the man who possesses the treasures of God.

My sisters and brothers, if I can only preach these words, then why should I turn my attention toward other paltry and small things of the earth? If we possess the One who existed before all else, all human beings and all things, if we possess the One who reveals the power of God, then why as Church would we seek power on this earth or wealth on this earth? Those who do not understand Christ can never become a voice of liberation nor can they feel their greatness, a greatness that should be felt by all people despite their seeming smallness here on earth. This is Christ: the glory of the Father, the glory of God who is reflected in Christ. It is for this reason that Saint Paul asks the Lord to give Christians the grace to know him and to know the power that God has revealed in Christ Jesus in his wonderful works. (k)

God has a plan of love and salvation for humankind and wants the history of people to coincide with his history of salvation. They are not the same thing and so it good that the history of people be inserted into the history of salvation. God wants to save all people and

all nations with his saving power that is revealed in Christ. God wants people to be able to live a history that is free from sin.

This idea is reflected in the first reading as the apostles approach Jesus and ask him a question that is somewhat insolent: *Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?* (l). Christ responds: *It is not for you to know the times or seasons that the Father has established by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you will be my witnesses* (m). In other words, there are two histories, the history of God that does not coincide with dates and human calculations and there is the history of humankind which ought to be concerned about inserting itself into the history of salvation, which ought to be concerned about believing in God. Despite the darkness of our history, God has his history and he will shine his glory upon the darkness and the clouds of our nation's history.

The saving plan of God does not coincide with our concerns. God will save those who hope in him, those who hand themselves over to his plans, those who love Christ and are not concerned about dates and hours and projects and the politics that people construct. The Christian politician, the Christian sociologist, and the Christian technician, these people ought to be concerned that the politics of the nation, the history of the nation and the technology of this earth coincide with the great plan of God that elevates the people of El Salvador to that which is divine and gives our history the power of salvation. There will be no salvation for those people of El Salvador who do not place their faith and their hope in the One who is the Lord of history, the One who is the key of salvation for all our problems.

The Second Vatican Council tells us that we should not confuse worldly progress with the growth of the Kingdom of God.(n) One reality deals with temporal progress. For example, there are beautiful buildings here in San Salvador and our nation has good highways and an airport, etc., but do we take time to consider whether all of this progress coincides with the Kingdom of God? The more progress that a people makes, the more material there is for God to save. As long as there is this wide breach between the material progress of the people and God's plan to save the world, we are not doing what God desires. Yes, there is much progress but little morality. We forget that humankind together with God are the principals of progress.

We could say many more things here about Christ, the glory of God but I want to pass on to the second aspect of this glorification of Christ.

Christ is the glorification of humankind

Christ is the glorification of humankind. The prayer in today's Mass expresses this idea and is better said in Latin: *Quo procesit gloria capitis, eo spes vocatorr et corporis*. This means that where the glory of the head has gone, the other members of the body journey there with hope. The new prayer reads: *May we follow him into the new creation for his ascension is our glory and our hope*. The head has entered into glory and all his members, all Christians are following behind him. Christ ascended into heaven not only so that he might be glorified but also so that all persons might be glorified in him. Those who die, if they die as friends of Jesus and are united to his grace and his truth, if they incorporated in him, then their heaven is secure. The Ascension has not ended, every time that a Christian dies, there is an ascension.

This morning a great collaborator of the Church has died in San Miguel, Choncita Asturias. I ask you to pray for her on this Sunday when we celebrate the feast of the Ascension. She is a humble member of the People of God and a woman of the people but now she is glorified in Christ. And concerning Father Segura, as I said during the Mass last Monday, the hour of Christ's glorification has not ended, for every time that a person dies, like Father Segura, we see the glorification of Christ --- a human being is glorified with the glory of the One who ascended into heaven.

At the same time that we are called to place our hope in a life hereafter, Christ has remained with us. As the head is the life of the body and the foot, even though this foot is rooted on this planet, yet the foot shares the same life as the head. This ought to be a cause for great joy for we know that our head has ascended into heaven, and we, his feet journey on this earth, and experience the presence of Christ with us. I see this reflected in today's readings and therefore say to you: the presence of Christ has been transformed. The apostles no longer experienced his physical presence that enabled them to touch him, and eat with him, and recognize his glance and his way of walking. We have been left no photograph of Jesus. What did he look like? We do not know what he looked like and perhaps that is providential that we know nothing about his physical appearance, because on this day, on this day of the Ascension, his presence in the world is transformed. He is no longer physically present but is present in a way that we refer to as his mystical presence. The Church is called the Mystical Body of Christ because he lives here, in us.

Today's gospel, which repeats the words of Christ, states: *Behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age* (o). What a great consolation! *I am with you!* A young person asked me: *Where is he? I want to see him.* I told this person: *You do see him; he is the Church, the confessor who absolves you of your sins, the hand that baptizes you; he is the one who comforts and offers you counsel; he is seen in the presence of all Christians; he is the people at Mass.* Yes Christ is here in this Cathedral and in all the communities where the faith of the People of God unites them around the altar. Christ is present in the host that I will raise up for you to adore. *I am with you always, until the end of the age.*

And there is another more beautiful reality, how is this mystical presence of Christ experienced here on earth? I invite you all to read once again during this week the second reading from Saint Paul's letter to the Ephesians. Notice verses 17-19 where Saint Paul asks God to give faith to the Christians *so that they might know what is the hope that belongs to his call, what are the riches of glory in his inheritance among the holy ones and what is the surpassing greatness of his power* (p). We no longer see Jesus walking this earth physically, but Jesus continues to walk and his presence is all of this: hope, riches in glory, and greatness of power. The Church, therefore, walks confidently, for she does not look for her support among the powers of this earth or the wealth of people but rather she finds her support in his hope, in the riches of his glory, and in the greatness of his power.

Christ is alive here --- not with the physical limited presence that he revealed while he lived in Palestine. Christ lives now in every village and town, in every family whose hearts trust in him, with all those afflicted persons who await the hour when their suffering will pass, with every person who is tortured and every prisoner, Christ is present in the hearts of those who hope and pray. Christ is present now in a much more lively way than when he walked the earth for thirty-three years among us. My sisters and brothers, Christ lives! Christ, glorified and seated at the right hand of the Father, lives and is present! He has

become the strength and the hope of this Pilgrim People on earth. This is the glorification of humankind in Christ. What an affliction it can be for us who are the Christ of history!

My sisters and brothers I see this presence of Christ and my heart is filled with emotion as I remember the first reading. The angels came down to warn the disciples as they stood there in ecstasy contemplating Christ who had been covered by a cloud. The great Spanish poet, Fray Luis de Granada³ has said: *the envious cloud hid the beauty of that Christ from the eyes of men*. We will no longer see him. The angels said this better and their words inaugurated a new history: *Men of Galilee, why are you standing there looking at the sky? This Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven will return* (q).

He will return! What beautiful words that have inspired the whole mystic of hope! The Church is on pilgrimage toward this encounter with the Lord. He will return. The Church knows that he will return. The Church knows that he will not perish or be humiliated but will return as the Judge of history. He will return and fulfill the hope of all those who trusted in him. He will return filled with love and embrace with an eternal love those who lived loving him. It is worthwhile to be a Christians because Christ will return!

With the Ascension of the Lord the final phase of history has been inaugurated. We are now in that phase and for the past twenty centuries humankind has been living in that phase. The first Christians thought that Jesus' return was immanent and Saint Paul had to correct them and tell them that no one knows when the Lord will return. (r) Centuries have passed but it is certain that the end of the world has been inaugurated. When Jesus ascended into heaven and placed in people this hope of his return, the final hours of history began, the definitive phase, the hour of the Church. The Church is charged with maintaining this hope alive in people. Therefore, in a short time, after the host is consecrated we will say: *Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again*. The Church is the beloved spouse who awaits the return of her beloved in order to embrace him and live together with a joy that will never end. My sisters and brothers, our Church is on pilgrimage toward that encounter.

Christ glorifies the universe

Christ glorifies the universe because in the passage from Saint Paul's letter we read that God gave Christ his power *seating him at his right hand in the heavens, far above every principality, authority, power, and dominion, and every name that is named not only in this age but also in the one to come* (s). In other words, my sisters and brothers, Christ is not only the key for universal history but the key of the whole universe. Everything that exists was created by him and for him.(t) Let us never forget that Christ is the ultimate explanation of all existence. Therefore the redemption that was accomplished by Christ was not only a redemption that saved humankind from sin but also a redemption that saved all of creation from slavery to sin. It is for this reason that Saint Paul says: *all creation is groaning in labor pains even until now* (u).

Money is good, but selfish persons have made it bad and sinful. Power is good, but abuse by humans has made it something to fear. All has been created by God, but humans have subjected it to sin. And so Christ's ascension proclaims that the whole creation will also be redeemed in him, because he will give meaning to all that God has created, and at the end of time (the time of the final judgment) he will place at God's feet the great adjudication of good and evil. Evil will be eliminated definitively and good will be taken up in the eternal glorification of Christ. The Lord's ascension also marks the glorification of the universe.

The universe rejoices, all material things --- farms and estates, everything --- rejoice because the day will come when the Supreme Judge will redeem from sin, from slavery, from shame, all that God has created and that humans are using for sin, for affront against their sisters and brothers. The redemption is already decreed, and in his power God has raised up Christ our Lord. Christ ascended into heaven is a witness to final justice.

Finally, my sisters and brothers, it is said that this glorification of God, humankind, and the universe, this glorification that was accomplished in Christ has been entrusted to his Church. At the conclusion of the reading from Saint Paul we hear: *He put all things beneath his feet and gave him as head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fullness of the one who fills all things in every way* (v).

The Church is like the fullness of Christ. We are making Christ present because we are his Church. We might say that his Church is the place where the glory of Christ, which is the glory of God and the glory of humankind and the glory of the world, is realized at this present time. This place, even the most inconspicuous place of the universe, a dot in human history, -- this place is where the People of God that Christ has constituted through Baptism become the depository of the glory of Christ. Therefore, the Church preaches that the Kingdom of God is present on this earth because you, my beloved brothers and sisters, and I are people of history. We live with our feet rooted on the soil of the earth. We are afflicted because of our social, political, and economic situation, but we are concrete persons, the concrete creation that Christ is saving in his Church. Therefore, the Church must preach this Kingdom of God, this glorification of Christ in history and in the world.

As we conclude these reflections, I ask you to place in your hearts this magnanimous thought: let us collaborate with Christ in making the world a better place! Let us make the progress of our nation a progress that is the pedestal of the glory of creation! Let us make the progress of our nation Christian! Let us work together with a Christian spirit! Let us encourage one another and let us build a society founded on peace that is cemented on the justice that God desires and on the faith that we now proclaim. Let us stand and proclaim our belief in God and in Christ.

¹ *Testimonio*, Alfonso Navarro, Publicación Búsqueda, Arzobispado de San Salvador, 1978.

² *Rutilio Grande, mártir de la evangelización rural en El Salvador*, UCS Editores, San Salvador, 1978.

³ In fact the verses referred to by Mons Romero belong to Fray Luís de León who wrote the poem *En la Ascensión* where they occur.

Margin References (a) Jn 8,32: (b) Jn 17,4-5: (c) Mt 28,18: (d) Ac 1,9: (e) Ep 1,17: (f) Ef 1,19-20: (g) Ef 1,20: (h) Jn 17,5: (i) Jn 1,1: (j) Jn 17,5: (k) Ep 1,17: (l) Ac 1,6: (m) Ac 1,7-8: (n) GS 39: (o) Mt 28,20: (p) Ep 1,18-19: (q) Ac 1,11: (r) 1Th 5,1-2: (s) Ep 1,20-21: (t) Col 1,16: (u) Rm 8,22: (v) Ep 1,22-23.