

Ascension Thurs. Mass
Schedule: Civilian Halls,
at usual weekday Mass time.

University of Notre Dame
Religious Bulletin
May 8, 1945

Also, Sorin, 7:20 and
Solemn Mass in Church
at 8:00.

Church: 5,6,7,8,9 (basement chapel)

VH - Day.

Yesterday we celebrated VE-Day. On Thursday, Catholics will rejoice because it is VH-Day (Victory in Heaven Day). Ascension Thursday is just that, a day of triumph for Christ, for God the Father, for innumerable souls.

Who was the first man to enter Heaven? If you can answer that question correctly, you have a fair idea of what happened on that day at Christ's Ascension. You are wrong, you think the holy men and women of the Old Testament days, men like Moses, the patient Job and John the Baptist entered Heaven immediately after death or after a period of suffering in Purgatory.

The moment Adam sinned the gates of Heaven were closed. In the plan of God, the first human being to pass through those gates was to be His Son, Christ. And that event was not to take place until forty days after the Resurrection.

What happened to all the saints of pre-Christian days? What became of them after death? They went to Hell (that was the Old Testament word for describing Limbo.) Catholics today use the word "Hell" in place of Limbo when they say the Apostles Creed: "Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, d i e d and was buried. He descended into Hell . . ." Christ went to Limbo (Hell) as soon as he died on the Cross. Limbo was not a place of suffering. There was happiness there, a far greater happiness than one could experience on earth, yet it was not the supernatural, the higher joy that comes from seeing God in Heaven.

Christ had a purpose in going to Limbo. He wanted to console the souls detained there by telling them that He had just paid their ransom by His blood and that in a short while He would release them for their heavenly reward.

Forty days after His Resurrection Our Lord made another visit to Limbo. This time He released every soul there. Perhaps millions of souls surrounded Him (this is what the Apostles could not see), and as His soul and body ascended into Heaven, the souls of the just ascended with Him. God the Father stood at the Gates of Heaven, and as soon as His Son appeared before them, He opened them. Christ crossed the threshold of Heaven first, and the others followed at His invitation.

When V-Day came, we rejoiced, for it was an historic day for all Americans. Should we not give emphasis to V-Day in the life of Our Lord and have a special feast day to commemorate it? The Ascension was truly V-Day for Christ. For He had brought home millions of His brothers. He had undone the work of Satan. His own life of glory was about to begin.

The Ascension of Christ brought great joy and glory to God the Father. Up to that time, it was only the angels who loved Him with a supernatural love. Now Heaven was filled with His exiled children and their hymns of love and gratitude. Never before was there so much rejoicing in Heaven. Finally, this was a moment of supreme joy for countless souls. The vision of their Heavenly Father enthralled them. Once inside the Gates of Heaven, the eternal thrill began for them.

On Thursday of this week, Mother Church wants Her children to think about the day Christ entered Heaven. She wants us to look forward to the day of our own Ascension. She asks us to assist at Mass because it is the best means of thanking God for the chance to reach Heaven. If She demands that we assist at Mass under pain of serious sin, it is because She knows that the fight against the world, flesh and the devil is not an easy one, and that by the Mass the Catholic can obtain the courage and strength to win the victory. Be realistic about the Ascension. If you were to die at this moment, would there be B-Day for you in Heaven or V-Day for Satan in Hell?