

"I can see heaven thrown open..."

This is the Ascension. This is Jesus blazing the trail. This is Jesus giving an opening into eternity, an opening into God Himself.

This is what we do at Mass. This is what we do in prayer, looking into heaven, gazing into heaven, even entering into heaven. Jesus doesn't just prise heaven open, he throws heaven open. He makes the loving presence of God available to us.

"Very soon now, I shall be with you again..."

Ascension as return. Ascension as the foretaste of the End, foretaste of the Day of Judgement, foretaste of the culmination of all things, the bringing together of Heaven and Earth, when God will be all in all.

"May they all be one. Father, may they be one in us as you are in me and I am in you." Ascension as union, as oneness, so sharing in Jesus, so identifying with Jesus, so being part of Jesus that we actually come to share in divinity itself.

To make all this happen – to see heaven thrown open, to experience the foretaste of eternity to know oneness and unity – there are three things we could do.

"Let all who are thirsty come." We have to actively **come** to Jesus. It's all 'free' but we still have to put in the effort of coming to Jesus, setting time aside and calling upon him.

"May they all be one....so that the world will believe it was you who sent me." We must take responsibility for our planet, for the whole of humanity, for our brothers and sisters everywhere. We must forget any notion that all this religion stuff is just my own individual, personal journey. All our praying is ultimately an act of solidarity with the whole of humanity. All our praying, all our work towards union with God is not just for ourselves but for everybody, *"...so that the world may believe"*.

And thirdly and finally we need to speak and live our faith. We need to be real witnesses. Like Stephen, we need to speak and live our faith even at the cost of our own lives.

"Amen. Come Lord, Jesus."

Fr Michael