

MAY 17, 2026 FATHER VIJAI AMIRTHARAJ

There is the story of one Duck Smith. Duck is on his deathbed and knows that his end is near. His nurse, his wife, his daughter, and his two sons are with him, and he asks for a video recorder to record his last wishes. He begins to speak.

“My son Bernie, I want you to take all the Mayfair houses. My dear daughter Christina, you take the apartments over the East End. My son Jamie, you take the offices over the city center. And Sarah, my dear wife, you take all the residential buildings on the bank of the river.”

The nurse and the witnesses are blown away as Duck slips away. The nurse says to his wife, “Mrs. Smith, your husband must have been a very hardworking man to have accumulated all this property.”

“Property?” his wife Sarah replies. “He did not have any property. He had a newspaper route.”

Sisters and brothers, when Jesus ascended into heaven, he did not have a plan for his little community. He did not have a roadmap as to what they needed to do. Rather, trusting in his Father’s will, he left it in the hands of his followers.

Now we are all familiar with the frequently used saying “to come full circle,” which means that people or things, having set out on a journey or a task, have returned to where they started. They have successfully completed the cycle and are back at the beginning.

In one sense, the Ascension celebrates Jesus coming full circle because, having come from his Heavenly Father to accomplish a particular mission, he returns back to the Father, having achieved what he was sent to do.

But in another sense, the Ascension marks the passing on of the baton by Jesus to his followers, to his apostles. During his public ministry, Jesus, in his words and in his actions, showed the loving nature of God. Now that responsibility for that ministry is being passed on to his followers.

However, he makes it clear to them that they will not be alone in their task. “I will be with you always,” he tells them—not physically, but spiritually through the Holy Spirit given at Pentecost, which we will celebrate next Sunday.

Now, sisters and brothers, as followers of Jesus in today’s world, we are entrusted with the same mission, and we too have been blessed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Our mission today is not necessarily to perform miracles or to work wonders—if you are able to do that, that’s wonderful—but to be the loving and caring presence of Jesus in our world today.

We also celebrate the World Day of Social Communications, and so on this day, we pray for ourselves that we may be the channels through whom God’s love is communicated to our families, to our communities, and to our society.