

## Liturgy for Ascension of the Lord and 59th World Day of Communications

June 1, 2025

*Theme: Share with gentleness the hope that is in your hearts (cf. 1 Pet 3:15-16)*

### Introduction

Today, the Church celebrates the Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord. In 1967, Pope Paul VI established World Communications Day to coincide with the Ascension of the Lord, so that the faithful may reflect on the role of communication in sharing the Gospel. As we celebrate this Jubilee Year, the Archdiocese of Bombay has dedicated the month of June to Communications. During this Eucharistic celebration, let us ask God for the grace that we too might be communicators of hope.

### Readings

First Reading: Acts 1:1-11

Second Reading: Eph 1:17-23

Gospel: Lk 24:46-53

**Homily Hints** (*From Pope Francis' message for the 59th World Day of Communications, dated 24 Jan, 2025 – feast of St Francis de Sales*)

- **Be Communicators of Hope**

Hope is not mere positive thinking or optimism. For Christians, it is a virtue that can change our lives. Communicating the message of the Gospel is not just an act of information, but an act of transformation, knowing that it makes things happen and is life-changing.

- **Disarming Communication**

In today's world, communication creates fear, despair, prejudice, resentment, fanaticism and hatred. Sometimes, communication also distorts information to agitate, provoke and hurt others. In such situations, our perception of reality is distorted and an 'us vs them' situation arises which makes it difficult to work towards the common good of all. We are encouraged to stay strong, not surrendering to this divisive mindset.

- **Communicating like Christ**

The theme for the 59th World Communications Day is based on 1 Peter 3:15-16, "In your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to

anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and reverence.” It has three significant messages on which we can meditate.

**a. In your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord- Christ is the face of hope**

Our hope is not intangible. Our hope is Christ, and in Christ. Romans 5:5 says, “Hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.” Hope is not loud and easily visible. It is patient and hidden, and therefore, God’s love enables us to perceive the hidden goodness that is present even when our senses fail to see it, and even when it seems hopeless to hope.

**b. Be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands it- Prepare to give an answer**

Communicating our faith isn’t about disseminating information. It is a task that comes more from the heart than the intellect. It is not in the words that we speak, but in the way we live our lives. As Christians, when we communicate our faith to the world, it should be through the beauty of God’s love that emanates from us. “And they’ll know we are Christians by our love.”

**c. Yet do it with gentleness and reverence- Emulate Christ in your communication**

When an explanation for our hope is demanded, we need to be able to make our defense, not defensively, but with tenderness and closeness. Christ Himself shows us how, when He accompanies the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, interpreting and explaining Scripture to them with patience and gentleness.

**● Journeying together as pilgrims of hope**

Pope Francis, in his message, envisioned a communication that -

- Speaks to the heart, evoking not defensiveness and anger, but openness and friendship
- Shifts our focus from hopelessness to beauty and hope
- Generates commitment, empathy and concern for others
- Encourages us to recognize the dignity of every human being, and care for the earth.
- Quells fears and has the ability to give people a reason to hope

Hope is not an individual effort. It is communitarian. We are reminded to also look into the social implications of the Jubilee Year of Hope, and how we can communicate God's hope to those on the periphery, the ones who suffer, those in prison, or those in our own parish communities who might need the reassurance and hope that comes from God's grace.

- **The heart at the centre of it all**

The heart is important. Communication must be from the heart of the communicator, and must reach the hearts of the men and women who receive this communication. Not just for those working in the media or journalism or communication as a profession, but for all of us, it is important to spread hope even in desperate or hopeless situations.

- **Share stories of hope**

Our communication should consist of stories that are hopeful. Instead of communicating only news that is bleak or despairing, we must sift through the information we receive and search for those stories of goodness and hope. It is important to find those seeds of hope, little as they may be. The world needs such stories of grace, mercy and most of all hope. The disciples communicated the hope of the resurrected Lord once He ascended into heaven, and became His witnesses to the ends of the earth. We are also encouraged to thus be communicators of the Gospel and be bearers of Christ's hope.

## Prayers of the Faithful

**Celebrant:** On the Solemnity of the Ascension, when the Risen Lord promises us that He will be with us to the end of age, we surrender our prayers and petitions to our loving Father.

**Our response is, "Lord, hear our prayer."**

1. That our Holy Father, Bishops, Priests and other Religious, may encourage the faithful to be communicators of hope, not only in the Church, but also in society and the world at large, by setting an example of love, truth, and gentleness. *We pray to the Lord...*
2. That those holding public office and in positions of leadership may communicate hope through their policies which cater to all peoples, irrespective of caste, creed, economic standing, and religion. *We pray to the Lord...*
3. That those working in media and communication may have the grace and wisdom to be agents of hope despite the brutality and stark bitterness of the realities they communicate to the world. *We pray to the Lord...*
4. That all of us gathered here may also be sharers in Christ's mission and spread His message of love and hope to all those we encounter, bearing witness to the Lord by the way we live our lives. *We pray to the Lord...*
5. That the Lord hear the prayers we now make in silence (*pause*) *We pray to the Lord...*

**Celebrant:** Heavenly Father, Jesus your Son ascended to heaven assuring us of your promise through the Holy Spirit. May we be messengers of peace to the world around us, communicating hope, mercy and grace, through Him, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever. Amen.