

## The Atonement and the Ascension (2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent, Year B)

### **Romans 8:31-34—God Did Not Spare His Son**

If God is for us, who is against us? <sup>32</sup> *He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, will he not also give us all things with him?* <sup>33</sup> Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? *It is God who justifies;* <sup>34</sup> *who is to condemn?* Is it Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised from the dead, *who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us?*" (Romans 8:31-34)

1. **Omnipotence:** "If God is for us, who is against us?" (8:31)
2. **Charity:** "He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all" (8:32)
3. **Generosity:** "will he not also give us all things with him" (8:32)
4. **Judgment:** if God "justifies" or "acquits" (Greek *dikaioō*), who can "condemn" (8:34)
5. **Paschal Mystery:** death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ (8:34)
6. **Intercession:** Christ "intercedes for us" (8:34)

### **The Living Tradition**

**John Chrysostom:** *Christ did not merely die for us; he now intercedes on our behalf as well...* The only reason why Paul mentioned intercession was to show the warmth and vigor of God's love for us, for the Father is also represented as beseeching us to be reconciled to him. (John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Romans* 15; trans. in NPNF1, 11:455)

**Pope Leo the Great:** If the true high priest does not atone for us, using the nature proper to us, and the true blood of the spotless Lamb does not cleanse us, then a true priesthood and true sacrifices do not exist in any other way in God's church, which is the body of Christ. *Although he is seated at the right hand of the Father, he performs the sacrament of the atonement in the same flesh which he assumed from the Virgin Mary.* (Leo the Great, *Letters* 80; trans. Edmund Hunt)

**Questions for Discussion and Reflection (2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent, Year B)**

1. What do you think of Paul's teaching that Christ is *interceding* for us right now at the right hand of the Father? What is the connection between the atoning power of the Crucifixion of Jesus and the intercessory power of his Ascension?

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**For Further Reading**

1. Gerald Bray, ed. *Romans*. Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, New Testament VI. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1998.
2. St. Leo the Great. *Letters*. Translated by Br. Edmund Hunt, CSC. Fathers of the Church. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1957.