

CLOSING PLENARY HOMILY

Little babies can't feed themselves or dress themselves—someone does it for them. But there comes a time when they want to do it themselves. And how does that go? A bit messy—but that's how we learn.

It's the same in life. We grow by trying, by taking responsibility, even by making mistakes. In today's feast of the Ascension, something like that is happening in the life of the Church. Jesus has been with his disciples.

He has taught them, guided them, formed them. And now—he lets them go. He could stay and do everything for them. But then they would never grow. So he entrusts the mission to them.

The Ascension is not so much a departure as a commissioning. Jesus sends them out and says, in effect: I trust you.

And the message from the angels is clear: "Why are you standing there looking at the sky?"

Don't just wait. Don't stand still. Go.

That word is for us today, as we close this stage of our diocesan synod.

We have spent months listening—to one another, to our communities, and to the Spirit.

Across this vast diocese—from the Torres Strait to the Cape, the Tablelands, the Gulf, and the Coast—we have heard both faith and challenge. And now, like those first disciples, we might wonder: what next? Today's feast gives the answer: Now is the time to act. God does not do everything for us. God works through us. Christ entrusts his mission to us—his Church in this place. We won't always get it right. Like learners, we will make mistakes. But we are not alone.

The promise of the Ascension is the promise of the Spirit. Christ remains with us—in the Eucharist, in his Word, in the life we share. So this synod is not an ending. It is a sending.

We are sent back to our communities—not to stand looking at the sky, but to build communities of faith, hope and love: to reach out to those in need, to support families, to care for this place entrusted to us, and to make the love of God visible here and now. Today the Lord says to us: I trust you.

Go—and know that I am with you always.