

In 1860, the Central Overland California and Pikes Peak Express Company, founded by William H. Russell, Alexander Majors, and William B. Waddell, began a fast mail service that was more popularly known as the Pony Express.

Riders weighing not more than 125 pounds, and using specially designed light-weight saddles would travel across 2,000 miles of land in order to deliver express mail from Missouri to California. Riding horses at the high speed of 15 to 25 miles per hour, riders would change horses every 10 to 15 miles; and do this 8 to 10 times.

By doing this sort of extreme riding and changing horses often, a parcel could be sent west-bound in just under 10 days; and east-bound in a little over 11 days. For its time, a minor miracle of sorts.

While the Pony Express only existed 19 months - from April 1860 until October 1861 - after which it was replaced by the telegraph ... it is a part of our national memory - an historical example of ingenuity and hard-work ... of accomplishing the impossible when necessary.

Today is the Solemnity of the Ascension of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Traditionally, the Ascension is on a Thursday, 40 days after Easter. Due to the shortage of priests in most of our

country it is almost universally transferred to - today - the following Sunday.

We hear two accounts of Our Lord's Ascension - in the first reading from the Acts of the Apostles; and in the Gospel reading from Saint Mark.

The Second Reading from St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians speaks of our being worthy of the call - that we may know the hope of our call - from God through Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The urgency with which we hear Our Lord tell his disciples in the Gospel to:

*Go into the whole world
and proclaim the gospel to every creature.*

... And to Baptize in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit - this same sense of urgency should be in our hearts when after hearing God's Word and receiving the Holy Eucharist - we are sent forth after every Sunday Mass from this place.

As we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, may we be filled with the power of the Holy Spirit - in order to worthily accept our own call ... in Faith, Hope, and Love. That we may

[go] forth and preach ... everywhere,

*while the Lord work[s] with [us]
and confirm[s] [His] word [in us] through accompanying
signs.*