

focus on sunday



THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD (World Communications Day) 12th May 2024

Jesus has taken his place at the right hand of the Father. His entry into glory is a cause of hope for us: that when our time comes, we too, will follow Jesus into the glory of heaven.



“Go out to the whole world; proclaim the Good News to all creation.”



Go out to the whole world

In today's Gospel we see Jesus handing over responsibility for his mission to his followers, who immediately go out as instructed, to 'proclaim the good news to the whole creation'. We know that our world today and all of creation is in need of good news, news that is life-giving. The challenge of discipleship in every age is to encounter the world, and people, just as they are. Pope Francis has often emphasised the importance of meeting people where they're at, just as Jesus did with all those he met. Pope Francis reminds us that, 'We need to spend time with people, to listen to their stories and to confront reality, which always in some way surprises us.'

The way in which Jesus reached out to heal and comfort, challenged but never judged, used images and parables that would resonate with his audience – this is the model for our communication and interaction with others as we attempt to live the Good News. This Good News of the Gospel spread as a result of heart-to-heart encounters with women and men, sharing, praying, reflecting together on the reality of day-to-day life, and how their encounter or experiences of the Risen Jesus offers peace and hope for our lives, and for our world, a vision of justice.

This week, reflect on those people who have been important on your faith journey. What conversations brought new insights for you? Where are the places to gather with fellow believers to discuss, learn and deepen your faith? How might you share good news with those you meet this week?

An extract from Triona Doherty & Jane Mellett, *The Deep End – A Journey Through the Sunday Gospels in the Year of Mark*, Messenger Publications, Dublin 2023.

were standing near them and they said, 'Why are you men from Galilee standing here looking into the sky? Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven, this same Jesus will come back in the same way as you have seen him go there.'

The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Ps. 46:2-3. 6-9

R. God goes up with shouts of joy; the Lord goes up with trumpet blast. or Alleluia!

1. All peoples, clap your hands, cry to God with shouts of joy!

For the Lord, the Most High, we must fear, great king over all the earth. (R)

2. God goes up with shouts of joy; the Lord goes up with trumpet blast. Sing praise for God, sing praise, sing praise to our king, sing praise. (R)

3. God is king of all the earth. Sing praise with all your skill. God is king over the nations; God reigns on his holy throne. (R)

SECOND READING Ephesians 4:1-13 (or*4:1-7.11-13)

A reading from the letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians
* I, the prisoner in the Lord, implore you to lead a life worthy of your vocation. Bear with one another charitably, in complete selflessness, gentleness and patience. Do all you can to preserve the unity of the Spirit by the peace that binds you together. There is one Body, one Spirit, just as you were all called into one and the same hope when you were called. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God who is Father of all, over all, through all and within all.

Each one of us, however, has been given his own share of grace, given as Christ allotted it.* It was said that he would:

When he ascended to the height, he captured prisoners, he gave gifts to men.

When it says, 'he ascended', what can it mean if not that he descended right down to the lower regions of the earth? The one who rose higher than all the heavens to fill all things is none other than the one who descended. And *to some, his gift was that they should be apostles; to some, prophets; to some, evangelists; to some, pastors and teachers; so that the saints together make a unity in the work of service, building up the body of Christ. In this way we are all to come to unity in our faith and in our knowledge of the Son of God, until we become the perfect Man, fully mature with the fullness of Christ himself.*

The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

GOspel ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia! Go, make disciples of all the nations; I am with you always; yes, to the end of time. Alleluia!

GOspel Mark 16:15-20

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark
Jesus showed himself to the Eleven, and said to them, 'Go out to the whole world; proclaim the Good News to all creation. He who believes and is baptised will be saved; he who does not believe will be condemned. These are the signs that will

be associated with believers: in my name they will cast out devils; they will have the gift of tongues; they will pick up snakes in their hands, and be unharmed should they drink deadly poison; they will lay their hands on the sick, who will recover.'

And so the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven: there at the right hand of God he took his place, while they, going out, preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word by the signs that accompanied it.

The Gospel of the Lord. Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, All bow for following two lines: who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead;

he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God, the Father almighty; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

We offer sacrifice now in supplication, O Lord, to honour the wondrous Ascension of your Son: grant, we pray, that through this most holy exchange we, too, may rise up to the heavenly realms. Through Christ our Lord.

AFTER THE CONSECRATION

The mystery of faith.

We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Men of Galilee, why gaze in wonder at the heavens? This Jesus whom you saw ascending into heaven will return as you saw him go, alleluia.

PENITENTIAL ACT

Lord Jesus, you have shown us the way to the Father: Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you have given us the consolation of the truth: Christ, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you are the Good Shepherd, leading us into everlasting life: Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

May almighty God have mercy on us.... **Amen.**

THE GLORIA

Glorify God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world,

have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.



LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING Acts 1: 1-11

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

In my earlier work, Theophilus, I dealt with everything Jesus had done and taught from the beginning until the day he gave his instructions to the apostles he had chosen through the Holy Spirit, and was taken up to heaven. He had shown himself alive to them after his Passion by many demonstrations: for forty days he had continued to appear to them and tell them about the kingdom of God. When he had been at table with them, he had told them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for what the Father had promised. 'It is' he had said 'what you have heard me speak about: John baptised with water but you, not many days from now, will be baptised with the Holy Spirit.'

Now having met together, they asked him, 'Lord, has the time come? Are you going to restore the kingdom to Israel?' He replied, 'It is not for you to know times or dates that the Father has decided by his own authority, but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and then you will be my witnesses not only in Jerusalem but throughout Judaea and Samaria, and indeed to the ends of the earth.'

As he said this he was lifted up while they looked on, and a cloud took him from their sight. They were still staring into the sky when suddenly two men in white