

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 came to gather the nations into the peace of God's kingdom:

Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

You come in word and sacrament to strengthen us in holiness:

Christ, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

You will come in glory with salvation for your people:

Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

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

THE GLORIA

Glory to 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.

OPENING PRAYER

Grant, we pray, almighty God, that we, who believe that your Only Begotten Son, our Redeemer, ascended this day to the heavens, may in spirit dwell already in heavenly realms.

Who lives and reigns



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 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 1: 17 - 23

A reading from the letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians

May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give you a spirit of wisdom and perception of what is revealed, to bring you to full knowledge of him. May he enlighten the eyes of your mind so that you can see what hope his call holds for you, what rich glories he has promised the saints will inherit and how infinitely great is the power that he has exercised for us believers. This you can tell from the strength of his power at work in Christ, when he used it to raise him from the dead and to make him sit at his right hand, in heaven, far above every Sovereignty, Authority, Power, or Domination, or any other name that can be named, not only in this age, but also in the age to come. He has put all things under his feet, and made him, as the ruler of everything, the head of the Church; which is his body, the fullness of him who fills the whole creation.

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 Matthew 28:16-20

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew
The eleven disciples set out for Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had arranged to meet them.



focus on sunday

THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD (World Communications Day) 21st May 2023

The Lord is absent: that was the first experience of Jesus' followers after his death. But even though he has returned to his Father, he is with us. Today's feast is the celebration that he is present both in heaven and on earth.



I am with you always



Know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time. When children grow up and leave home to begin a life on their own, both parents and children feel the truth of those words, 'Know that I am with you always.' The child's leaving home may be necessary so their love for parents, and vice versa, can come to full bloom.

It was only many years after my parents were gone did I come to realise what a phenomenal blessing they had been to me. I shed my tears at their loss and wondered about getting on with life without them. Absence makes the heart grow fonder. Now, almost fifty years later, I feel stronger towards them than I did while they were alive.

Jesus told his disciples on the night before he died that unless he went away the Spirit would not come to them. The mystery of the Ascension celebrates the mysterious reality of Jesus' presence in his absence. Today's feast is not calling us to live in the darkness of Jesus' absence – sheer blind and cold faith in someone who is gone.

You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you (Acts 1). The Ascension celebrates, rather, the work of the Holy Spirit making us aware of the deep richness of Jesus in our midst: the meaning of his life and miracles and words for us today, and the conviction that he is still alive and with us. When we feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, comfort the sick and incarcerated, we are serving the very person of Christ risen and living in people everywhere.

Absence makes the heart grow fonder. I feel stronger towards my parents now than I did while they were alive. Jesus said that "unless I go the Spirit cannot come." The Spirit brought home more clearly to the disciples who Jesus really was.

Fr. Joe Walsh