

SOLEMNITY OF THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD



Make Us a Gift

Loving Father,
you sent your Son into the world
that we might see you by seeing him.
He offered his life as a gift
for the life of the world.
On the third day, you raised him to life,
a life so powerful it could never again die.
Grant us the grace to offer our lives
as a gift for the life of the world,
so that, dying with Jesus, we might
rise with him.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Sunday, May 16, 2021
We Hope to Follow



Today's readings: Acts 1:1–11; Psalm 47:2–3, 6–7, 8–9; Ephesians 4:1–13; Mark 16:15–20. After the resurrection, Jesus appeared again and again over a forty-day period. He explained the Scriptures to his disciples, they touched him, and they shared meals together. Often it took them time to recognize him.

On the fortieth day, Jesus commissioned the apostles to preach the Gospel to all creatures and to baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Sometimes it seems that these first witnesses were the lucky ones. They saw Jesus, heard his voice and teachings, and perhaps even touched his wounds. Having seen, how could they have done anything but believe? And yet until the Holy Spirit descended at Pentecost, they were afraid. They had seen what had happened to him, and even though he had

risen, they could not have been eager to face persecution themselves. But even though Jesus was gone, he had not abandoned them.

The Ascension is a feast of joy, joy in the Father glorifying Jesus. It is also a feast of anticipation, because we hope that we too will be raised, that we too will be taken up to Jesus because we belong to him. We hope that by believing in Jesus and by living in imitation of him, we too might be citizens of heaven, raised up by the Father.

Our lives become gifts to God when we die to ourselves and unite ourselves to Jesus. May our prayer be one of offering our whole lives to the Father so that dying with the Lord, we might rise with him. Where he has gone, we hope to follow.



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, May 17

Transformed by the Spirit

In the reading from Acts, the men begin to speak in tongues after Paul lays hands on them. Our lives should also look markedly different because the Holy Spirit is within us. Where do you see the Holy Spirit at work in your life? When making big decisions, do you rely on the guidance of the Spirit? How can you invite God to be part of your process of discerning your best way forward? *Today's readings: Acts 19:1–8; Psalm 68:2–3ab, 4–5acd, 6–7ab; John 16:29–33.*

Tuesday, May 18

Bearing Witness

As Paul looks at the possibility of his future martyrdom, his words echo the words of Jesus before the passion. Both focused on the people they served, the people who were their mission. Jesus, sent by God, and Paul, sent by the risen Christ, both call all people into the light so that the plan of God might be fulfilled. God is always sending us too. How are you called to “bear witness to the gospel of God’s grace”? *Today's readings: Acts 20:17–27; Psalm 68:10–11, 20–21; John 17:1–11a.*

Wednesday, May 19

Spring and New Life

As spring progresses in the northern hemisphere, the natural world abounds with beauty. Take some time to walk in nature and experience the beauty of God’s creation. Is this a time when it is easy for you to experience God’s presence? How can you take more time for listening in this way? Care of creation is one of our duties as human beings, to whom God entrusted the natural world. Is there something simple you can do to care for God’s creation today? *Today's readings: Acts 20:28–38; Psalm 68:29–30, 33–35a, 35bc–36ab; John 17:11b–19.*

Thursday, May 20

Peacemakers

The reading from Acts portrays an event in which religious people react to Paul’s actions out of their conviction. So stirred up are the factions that they have a difficult time responding peacefully. Sometimes people who love the Church can be like this. Strong emotions arise when people become defensive, when it seems like their ways of being in relationship with God are challenged. Yet we are called to be peacemakers, even as we are called to speak the truth and give prophetic witness. Christ’s peace is received in the Eucharist. How can you live out this call to make peace within the Church? *Today's readings: Acts 22:30, 23:6–11; Psalm 16:1–2a and 5, 7–8, 9–10, 11; John 17:20–26.*

Friday, May 21

Our Lives as a Gift

The number of times Peter declares his love for Jesus corresponds to his three denials of the Lord before the crucifixion. With these affirmations, Jesus tells Peter to “feed my sheep.” No matter what we have done in the past, God is waiting to redeem it. Everyone’s life can be offered as a gift to God, the giver of life. *Today's readings: Acts 25:13b–21; Psalm 103:1–2, 11–12, 19–20ab; John 21:15–19.*

Saturday, May 22

Preparing for Pentecost

Consider planning a celebration for Pentecost. Gather party supplies in red, the liturgical color of the day. The celebration could be a birthday party, since Pentecost is often considered the birth of the Church. Decorate with doves or tongues of fire. Prayer cards could highlight the gifts of the Holy Spirit: wisdom, knowledge, understanding, counsel, fear of the Lord, piety, and fortitude. *Today's readings: Acts 28:16–20, 30–31; Psalm 11:4, 5 and 7; John 21:20–25.*

