



AMDG
THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD
YEAR A
21ST MAY 2020



The Lord goes up with shouts of joy!

OPENING PRAYER

Gladden us with holy joys, almighty God,
and make us rejoice with devout thanksgiving,
for the Ascension of Christ your Son is our exaltation,
and, where the Head has gone before in glory,
the Body is called to follow in hope.

With the feast of the Ascension of the Lord, we come to the end of Jesus's earthly life. For the Apostles, it has been a journey from suffering and death to the joy of the Resurrection. The Ascension is another huge step in experiencing the Lord's presence as they continue his work.

The *First Reading* gives an account of the Ascension from the Acts of the Apostles. Having been instructed by Jesus for forty days, they now witness his Ascension and are promised the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The *Psalm* exults in praise for the Lord, who is raised on high and is acclaimed as king of all the earth.

St Paul, in the *Second Reading*, prays that we may fully realise our own glorious hope. God our Father, in raising Jesus high, bestows on us the hope of sharing in his glory.

The *Gospel* is short and to the point. The eleven receive Jesus's blessing, as they are sent out to spread his word throughout the earth. They are also given the promise that Jesus will be with them always.

Following some very hard, demanding and painful months, we too are reminded that the Lord is always with us as we are being continuously sent out in his name.

SECOND READING EPHESIANS 1: 17–23

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 we 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.

As I settle to pray, I remember that God is always here, waiting for me to turn to him. I place myself in his loving presence.

What grace do I want to ask for today?

I read the text slowly.

In the first part I notice that this is Paul praying for me.

Does his prayer echo the graces I have asked for?

If so, in what way?

How does it clarify for me desires that I might not yet have expressed?

I consider Jesus, at his Ascension, raised to sit at his Father's right hand.

Since we are his 'body', as part of the Church, perhaps I can glimpse the hope that is ours: *'Where he has gone, we hope to follow'*.

We hope one day to live for ever in his Kingdom, but it is the risen, ascended Lord who lives in and with us each day.

I may spend some time in praise and gratitude for this mystery, and speak to the Lord of how I wish to live in his presence in this difficult time for myself, my loved ones and all peoples.

I end my prayer asking the Lord to keep his body, the Church, safe in his love.

GOSPEL MATTHEW 28: 16–20

The eleven disciples set out for Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had arranged to meet them. When they saw him they fell down before him, though some hesitated. Jesus came up and spoke to them. He said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, make disciples of all the nations; baptise them in the name of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.’

I come to my place of prayer, and I slowly breathe in God’s presence around and deep with in me.

When I am ready, I take up the text and read it carefully a couple of times. Perhaps I can imagine the scene, and can place myself with the disciples, reunited on the mountain.

With them I have spent three years with Jesus. I have heard his words, seen his works, and have come to love and follow him. Then I witnessed his arrest and cruel crucifixion. I have also rejoiced in his resurrection, and for the past 40 days, have learnt so much more from him.

When he appears before me now, how do I feel?

What is my relationship with him?

I respond in any way I can, and speak to him from my heart.

As Jesus speaks, I am aware of his authority; that his words are of huge importance to me and for the future of his mission. He is sending us out to teach and baptise in his name.

Can I rejoice in this ... or am I doubting and anxious?

I spend some time absorbing his words and their implication for me.

I receive his promise – ‘I am with you always’.

I allow these words to register in my mind and in my heart.

Perhaps I ask the Lord to strengthen my faith and trust in him.

In what way have I felt Jesus’s presence during the pandemic?

I turn to him, and pray for all those still struggling and suffering.

I ask him to be with his Church and with all his people all over the world.

I end my prayer with a slow *Our Father* ...

Here's a text if you've only got a minute ...

God goes up with shouts of joy;
the Lord goes up with trumpet blast.

Psalm

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

Gospel Acclamation

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Gospel

This week's texts if you want to explore further
Acts 1: 1–11; Psalm 46 (47); Ephesians 1: 17–23; Matthew 28: 16–20



He was lifted up while they looked on,
and a cloud took him from their sight.



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JESUIT
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