

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.

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.

COLLECT
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.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the
Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READINGActs 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 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.

PSALMPs 46 (47):2-3,6-7,8-9

Response:
Response: 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 READINGEp 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 Lk 24:46-53

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.
Jesus said to his disciples: "You see how it is written that the Christ would suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that, in his name, repentance for the forgiveness of sins would be preached to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses to this.
"And now I am sending down to you what the Father has promised. Stay in the city then, until you are clothed with the power from on high." Then he took them out as far as the outskirts of Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. Now as he blessed them, he withdrew from them and was carried up to heaven.

They worshipped him and then went back to Jerusalem full of joy; and they were continually in the Temple praising God.

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

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.
I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,

(all bow during the next three lines)

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored
and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

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.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Behold, I am with you always,
even to the end of the age, alleluia.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Almighty ever-living God,
who allow those on earth to celebrate divine mysteries,
grant, we pray,
that Christian hope may draw us onward
to where our nature is united with you.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

THE WORD



Luke has the distinction of writing two accounts of the Ascension. The first is today's Gospel and the second, from the Acts of the Apostles, is the first reading.

There are slight differences between them. Most significantly perhaps, Acts places the Ascension some forty days after the resurrection. You could say that Luke has created the liturgical season of Easter that goes from Easter to Pentecost. For Luke, the time between resurrection and the coming of the Spirit is a privileged time of Jesus' presence with the disciples.

Today's Gospel begins with some final words of Jesus to the disciples. They are to preach repentance and forgiveness of sins, 'beginning from Jerusalem.' That will be the plan of the Church's mission. The Ascension is not a feast of farewell but one that celebrates mission. At the heart of the mission of the followers of Jesus is a liberating message of forgiveness.

The second part of today's Gospel is a short account of the Ascension itself. Jesus and his disciples go to the village of Bethany, outside Jerusalem, on the slopes of the Mount of Olives. As he blesses his disciples, Jesus is taken up to heaven. The disciples then return to the Holy City and frequent the temple 'praising God.' ■

REFLECT

When Elie Wiesel was a teenager, he and his family were imprisoned in Auschwitz, one of the millions of Jews caught up in the holocaust. Apart from himself, all of Elie's family perished in that horrible place. After the war, he made it his business to remind the world about the holocaust, to ensure it would never be forgotten.

In one of his books, he describes an execution that all the prisoners were forced to witness. Three men were hanged by the Nazis, one of them just a teenage boy. They had been accused of blowing up a power station. As a warning to the others in the camp, all the prisoners were forced to walk by and see the execution at close range. By the time Elie marched by, the two adults were dead. But the youth was still alive, struggling between life and death. Behind

him, Elie heard a prisoner cry out: "Where is God now? Where is He?"

The lad lingered on. Once again Elie heard the man ask, "Where is God?" Then Elie Wiesel said, "I heard a voice within me answer him: Where is God? He is there, hanging on the gallows."

There are times when, like that man in Auschwitz, we can find ourselves asking, pleading, wondering where is God. Where is God in the midst of war, terrorism, fear, and hatred? Our world today is plagued by all kinds of injustice, violence, hatred. We worry about the security of Europe. We worry about the future of NATO. We worry about the growing tide of populism that seeks to set peoples against one another, encouraging suspicion and antipathy rather than harmony and commonality. We

Pope Francis says that Catholics must be "shepherds living with the smell of the sheep." In other words, we must leave our comfort zones to make Christ present in all places and at all times. We mustn't confine ourselves to the security of our churches and homes but go out into the streets and alleyways to proclaim the Good News. There is an urgency to our task because there is a whole world out there that is hurting, lost, abandoned, that is being oppressed or experiencing injustice, and that needs to hear the message of Jesus. Our great commission is to bring the comforting and liberating message of Jesus Christ to all we meet.

PRAY

Pray for all those who witness to the Gospel by the example of their lives.

LEARN

Jesus has promised to be with us always, to the end of time

The feast of the Ascension reminds us that we are commissioned to preach the message of Christ

SAY

"Lord, I thank you for the gift of faith. Never let me forget that you are with me always, in the good times and the bad."

worry that not enough is being done to protect our precious earth from the effects of climate change. We worry about the possible misuse of Artificial Intelligence and synthetic biology. The future can seem bleak.

But the promise Jesus made to his disciples is true: God has sent the Holy Spirit to be with us. The Second Vatican Council says that the Church, and all the People of God, are imbued with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit gives us the strength to cope with the difficulties that come our way and the courage to witness to the Gospel. No matter how bad things might seem, we know that God will never abandon us, that God will always be by our side, as Elie Wiesel realised as he watched that boy on the Auschwitz gallows all those years ago. ■