

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

Glorify 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

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 with you in the unity of
the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

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 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.

PSALM

Psalm 46

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 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

Luke 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 ASCENSION OF JESUS

(LK 24: 46-53)



Detail from tiled mosaic of the Ascension in All Saints Church, London, designed by Butterfield and painted by Alexander Gibbs (1873)

Luke's Gospel is dramatic in its clarity and brevity today as before. Jesus ascends into heaven to sit at the Father's right hand, he reiterates to his disciples his mission on earth.

The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead and the repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all the nations. The risen Christ and the love and mercy of God are teachings that underpin the missionary activity of the Church. After stating his purpose and his desire that his mission should continue through the work of the Holy Spirit, Jesus blesses them and is taken up into heaven. Of course, this moment is not marked by any sadness or loneliness on the disciples' part. They return to Jerusalem with great joy and stay in the temple to preach and teach everything they have heard.

On this solemnity of the Ascension of Jesus, it is important for us believers to acknowledge that the ascension is not the end, it is only the beginning. In today's first reading, the disciples are instructed not to stand around looking up into the sky wondering where Jesus could possibly have disappeared to. No!! The work of discipleship truly begins after the ascension of Jesus for through the ministry of his followers, the Kingdom of God establishes itself more and more on earth. Remember the recurring theme from Christ's preaching on earth. Jesus will rise from the dead and God's love and mercy will be made known to all the nations. ■

REFLECT

Today, the Catholic Church celebrates *World Communications Day* and most of us can claim to be experts in this field with the advent of smart phones and other devices that bring us into contact with a range of possibilities through the internet. There are huge positives attached to being able to use the internet, not least for people who live away from home and can keep in contact with family through WhatsApp, Facebook and other platforms. Pope Francis himself stated back in 2014 that the internet should be "an environment rich in humanity, a network not of wires but of people".

We not only celebrate today but we also reflect on the current state and nature of relationships on the internet. Cardinal

Paolo Ruffini, Prefect of the Dicastery for Communication states that social media can nourish "true, beautiful, solid relationships but it can also fuel hatred". He goes on to state that Pope Francis wants people to view social media not as something that traps you, but something that frees you and that you make an instrument of freedom. On this 53rd World Communications Day, the church underlines the value of interaction understood as dialogue and as an opportunity to meet with others.

Today also confirms Pope Francis' attention to the new communications environment where he is present with his @Pontifex account on Twitter and @Franciscus account on Instagram. ■

LEARN

"The Ascension does not point to Jesus' absence, but tells us that he is alive in our midst in a new way." (Pope Francis)

DO

Remind yourself of the Church's teaching on today's great solemnity. The *Catechism* states: "The lifting up of Jesus on the cross signifies and announces his lifting up by his Ascension into heaven" (n. 662). Read Luke's two accounts from today's celebration and ask yourself how the Ascension of Jesus impacts on your life.

SAY

**"Where there is shouting,
let us practise listening;
Where there is confusion,
let us inspire harmony;
Where there is exclusion,
let us offer solidarity;
Where there is falsehood,
let us bring truth."**

(Excerpt from Pope Francis for World Communications Day, 2018)