

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.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Mt 28:19, 20
Alleluia, alleluia! Go and teach all people my gospel. I am with you always, until the end of the world. Alleluia!

GOSPEL Lk 24:46-53
A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

While blessing them, he was taken to heaven.

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.

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REFLECTING ON OUR CALL

As we celebrate the feast of the Ascension the words of the angels to the disciples can serve as a useful reminder of the meaning of this feast: 'Why are you standing here looking up at the sky?' The disciples had just witnessed the departure of their Lord and while their immediate reaction was natural there was work to be done; a mission had been entrusted to them. It was no time for standing still but getting down to the work at hand.

Firstly, the Lord had given them the mission of preaching the salvation that Jesus offered to the whole world. Secondly, they had to prepare for the gift of the Spirit which would enable and empower them to undertake their task. As the Gospel of Luke concludes we find the disciples in prayer in the temple waiting for the gift of the Spirit, joyfully pondering on what they had experienced.

The reading from the letter to the Ephesians calls us to share in that journey of reflection into the meaning of not only the life of Jesus but our own life as Christians. As Paul reflected on Jesus' life, death and resurrection, he came to see that it was truly a cosmic event. Jesus was not just Lord of death but all creation. The Ephesians are invited to reflect on the richness of the gift they have all received as Christians. Today's feast of the Ascension calls us to rejoice in, and reflect on, our call and mission.

Christopher Monaghan CP

FIRST READING

Acts 1:1-11

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

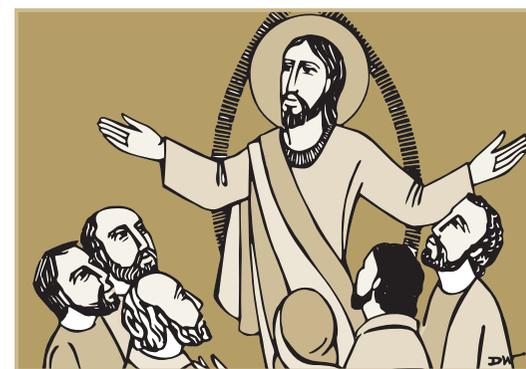
*Why are you standing here looking into the sky?
Jesus has been taken into heaven.*

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 of 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.



RESPONSORIAL PSALM Ps 46:2-3, 6-9. R. v. 6

R. God mounts his throne to shouts of joy:
a blare of trumpets for the Lord.
(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 Eph 1:17-23

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the
Ephesians

He made Jesus to sit at his right hand in heaven.

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