

Today in Focus

MAY 24 » THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD
OR SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Always remember



As I read today's readings, I kept returning to the final line of the gospel: "And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Since 2017, I have experienced memory loss or mild cognitive impairment. So Jesus' urging that we remember his promise gets my attention. Memory should never be taken for granted. Since my problems began, I have done my best to remember God's love in the Eucharist, daily prayer, and the others with whom I share my life. Jesus' promise to be with us always strengthens and comforts me.

Before Jesus ascends into heaven, he tells his disciples they will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon them. God wants so much to be with us that God will find a way. No matter what our circumstances, whatever difficulties we face, God is with us. We need to sit with these words, reading them slowly, again and again to let them sink into our minds and hearts.

When you suffer, remember to give God space, especially in your heart. Yours will be a powerful witness, and lives will change, though you may know nothing about it. Remember Christ's words: "I am with you always." ● **HARRY MCAVOY**

Sunday, May 24

If your parish celebrated the Ascension on Thursday, May 10, turn to the Seventh Sunday of Easter, page 166.

MASS OF THE ASCENSION

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (*Acts 1:11*)

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.

INTRODUCTORY RITES (*page 27*)

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,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

OR

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*)

In the first book, Theophilus, I dealt with all that Jesus did and taught until the day he was taken up, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. He presented himself alive to them by many proofs after he had suffered, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. While meeting with them, he enjoined them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for “the promise of the Father about which you have heard me speak; for John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

When they had gathered together they asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” He answered them, “It is not for you to know the times or seasons that the Father has established by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” When he had said this, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him from their sight. While they were looking intently at the sky as he was going, suddenly two men dressed in white garments stood beside them. They said, “Men of Galilee, why are you standing there looking at the sky? This Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven will return in the same way you have seen him going into

heaven.”
 The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

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

R *God mounts his throne to
 shouts of joy: a blare of
 trumpets for the Lord.*

OR Alleluia.

All you peoples,
 clap your hands,
 shout to God with cries
 of gladness,
 for the LORD, the Most High,
 the awesome,
 is the great king over
 all the earth. **R**

God mounts his throne
 amid shouts of joy;
 the LORD, amid trumpet
 blasts.

Sing praise to God,
 sing praise;
 sing praise to our king,
 sing praise. **R**

For king of all the earth
 is God;

sing hymns of praise.
 God reigns over the nations,
 God sits upon
 his holy throne. **R**

SECOND READING (*Ephesians 1:17-23*)

Brothers and sisters: May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give you a Spirit of wisdom and revelation resulting in knowledge of him. May the eyes of your hearts be enlightened, that you may know what is the hope that belongs to his call, what are the riches of glory in his inheritance among the holy ones, and what is the surpassing greatness of his power for us who believe, in accord with the exercise of his great might, which he worked in Christ, raising him from the dead and seating him at his right hand in the heavens, far above every principality, authority, power, and dominion, and every name that is

named not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things beneath his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of the one who fills all things in every way.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

ALLELUIA (*Matthew 28:19a, 20b*)

Alleluia, alleluia. Go and teach all nations, says the Lord; I am with you always, until the end of the world. **Alleluia, alleluia.**

GOSPEL (*Matthew 28:16-20*)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew. **Glorify to you, O Lord.**

The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them. When they saw him, they worshiped, but they doubted. Then Jesus

approached and said to them, “All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH (*page 30*)

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

PREPARATION OF GIFTS (*page 32*)

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

We offer sacrifice now in supplication, O Lord, to honor 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.

PREFACE (*Ascension, page 34*)

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

(*Matthew 28:20*)

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.

BLESSING & DISMISSAL (*page 58*)



RESPONDING TO THE WORD

Jesus sends us to make disciples of others.

● **What can I do to bring someone closer to Christ today?**

Jesus, today I will...

SAYING AMEN

In the Prayer After Communion, we pray "that CHristian hope may draw us onward..."

● **How strong is "Christian hope" in me?**

Jesus, help me...

✦ SEE PAGES 18-19 FOR MORE
 REFLECTIONS ON TODAY'S
 FIRST READING. ✦

**MASS FOR THE SEVENTH
SUNDAY OF EASTER**

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

(Cf. Psalm 27 [26]:7-9)

O Lord, hear my voice, for I
have called to you; of you my
heart has spoken: Seek his
face; hide not your face from
me, alleluia.

INTRODUCTORY RITES *(page 27)*

COLLECT

Graciously hear our
supplications, O Lord,
so that we, who believe that
the Savior of the human
race
is with you in your glory,
may experience, as he
promised,
until the end of the world,
his abiding presence
among us.
Who lives and reigns with
you in the unity of the
Holy Spirit,

one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

FIRST READING *(Acts 1:12-14)*

After Jesus had been taken
up to heaven the apostles
returned to Jerusalem from
the mount called Olivet,
which is near Jerusalem, a sab-
bath day's journey away.

When they entered the city
they went to the upper room
where they were staying, Peter
and John and James and
Andrew, Philip and Thomas,
Bartholomew and Matthew,
James son of Alphaeus, Simon
the Zealot, and Judas son
of James. All these devoted
themselves with one accord
to prayer, together with some
women, and Mary the mother
of Jesus, and his brothers.
The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM*(Psalm 27:1, 4, 7-8)*

R *I believe that I shall see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living.* **OR Alleluia.**

The LORD is my light
and my salvation;
whom should I fear?
The LORD is my life's refuge;
of whom should
I be afraid? **R**
One thing I ask of the LORD;
this I seek:
To dwell in the house
of the LORD
all the days of my life,
that I may gaze on the
loveliness of the LORD
and contemplate
his temple. **R**
Hear, O LORD, the sound
of my call;
have pity on me,
and answer me.
Of you my heart speaks;
you my glance seeks. **R**

SECOND READING *(1 Peter 4:13-16)*

Beloved: Rejoice to the extent that you share in the sufferings of Christ, so that when his glory is revealed you may also rejoice exultantly. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. But let no one among you be made to suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as an intriguer. But whoever is made to suffer as a Christian should not be ashamed but glorify God because of the name. The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

ALLELUIA *(See John 14:18)*

Alleluia, alleluia. I will not leave you orphans, says the Lord. I will come back to you, and your hearts will rejoice. **Alleluia, alleluia.**

GOSPEL (*John 17:1-11a*)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and said, “Father, the hour has come. Give glory to your son, so that your son may glorify you, just as you gave him authority over all people, so that your son may give eternal life to all you gave him. Now this is eternal life, that they should know you, the only true God, and the one whom you sent, Jesus Christ. I glorified you on earth by accomplishing the work that you gave me to do. Now glorify me, Father, with you, with the glory that I had with you before the world began.

“I revealed your name to those whom you gave me out of the world. They belonged to you, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your

word. Now they know that everything you gave me is from you, because the words you gave to me I have given to them, and they accepted them and truly understood that I came from you, and they have believed that you sent me. I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for the ones you have given me, because they are yours, and everything of mine is yours and everything of yours is mine, and I have been glorified in them. And now I will no longer be in the world, but they are in the world, while I am coming to you.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH (*page 30*)

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

PREPARATION OF GIFTS (*page 32*)

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Accept, O Lord, the prayers of
 your faithful
 with the sacrificial offerings,
 that through these acts of
 devotedness
 we may pass over
 to the glory of heaven.
 Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

PREFACE (*Easter, pages 33-34, or
 Ascension, page 34*)

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

(*John 17:22*)

Father, I pray that they may
 be one as we also are one,
 alleluia.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Hear us, O God our Savior,
 and grant us confidence,
 that through these sacred
 mysteries
 there will be accomplished
 in the body of the whole
 Church

what has already come to
 pass in Christ her Head.
 Who lives and reigns
 for ever and ever. **Amen.**

BLESSING & DISMISSAL (*page 58*)**RESPONDING TO THE WORD**

Jesus prays that we continue his
 work and stay free of evil.

- **What can I do to be more attentive to the way that evil wants to change my relation to God and others?**

Jesus, today I will...

SAYING AMEN

In the Collect, we pray that we
 may continue to feel Jesus' abiding
 presence.

- **Where do I wish I could feel a stronger sense of Jesus' presence?**

Jesus, help me...

Living with Christ **This Week**

SEVENTH WEEK OF EASTER

Our Easter Eucharist reminds us of our new life in Christ, and this week's readings explore what this means for our everyday behavior. The readings from Acts describe how the disciples proclaim the Easter message of salvation. In the gospels, we discover various responses to the experience of the risen Lord. The risen Christ is disguised and must be recognized, and the disciples are sent to share their experience with others. ●

PSALM RESPONSE

R *God mounts his throne to shouts of joy: a blare of trumpets for the Lord.*

Our psalm response for this week reminds us to rejoice because Christ has ascended to his glory with God the Father.

GENERAL INTERCESSIONS

Use these intercessions with your prayers this week.

- For all who are trying to follow Christ, we pray:
R *Jesus, come into our hearts.*
- For leaders working for peace and justice among the nations: **R**
- For those who live in fear or loneliness, and for us and others who are called to help them: **R**
- For those who seek the strength to forgive: **R**