



Christ in Our Neighborhood

Prayer

Lord Jesus, after appearing to Your disciples, You ascended to heaven and took Your place at the Father's right hand. May we find our place seated with You at the eternal banquet, where You reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever. Amen.

Commentary

1st Reading: Acts 1: 1-11

The writer of the Gospel of Luke also authored the Acts of the Apostles. In his second book, Luke says that Jesus appeared to the disciples in His Resurrected body for 40 days. After His appearances, He ascended to the Father. Luke describes it this way:

“He was lifted up before their [disciples’] eyes in a cloud which took Him from their sight.”

There are some today who doubt the authenticity of this scene where Jesus ascended beyond the clouds. However, for the same reason we continue to proclaim our belief in the bodily Resurrection of our Lord, we adhere to this truth that Jesus truly ascended. Namely, beyond the written testimony of the early Church, we have the “blood” testimony of the martyred Apostles and disciples who saw and believed. They could have recanted their testimony in order to save their lives. But, they didn't.

As people of faith, we believe in the metaphysical (not metaphorical or poetic) truths of these related happenings in Christian Scripture.

Question

What does it take for you to believe in something that cannot be explained by science?

Commentary

2nd Reading: Ephesians 1: 17-23

Beyond the need to examine the physical or metaphysical truths of the mystery of the Ascension, there is a need to get to the purpose for such an event. Why did Jesus ascend?

The Letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians tells us that Jesus ascended in order to take His place at God's right hand.

It is from this exalted place that Jesus reigns as head over His Body, the Church. Our faith reminds us that the whole Christ is recognized and celebrated. Jesus the

head and we, the Body, are one. With this truth, we are comforted with Jesus' own words that He would remain with us until the end of time.

One with Christ, the Body of Christ enjoys the blessings of heaven. Paul prays that we will “know the great hope to which He has called [us], the wealth of His glorious heritage to be distributed among the members of the Church.” According to St. Paul, we are co-heirs with Christ to the Kingdom of heaven.

Question

How do you show that you are a co-heir with Christ?

The Feast of the Ascension, normally celebrated on the 40th day of Easter, replaces in some dioceses the normal Seventh Sunday of Easter.

For the purposes of regular group sharing, consult your bulletin or diocesan website to determine whether or not these readings are used on Sunday in your area.

Commentary

Gospel: Mark 16: 15-20

The Gospel of Mark gives us another theological reason or purpose for this Feast of the Ascension. Jesus now expects the Body of Christ, beginning with the Apostles, to “Go out into the whole world and proclaim the good news to all creation.”

This should bring us back to the Genesis account where Adam and Eve were entrusted with dominion over all of creation. Having a share in the stewardship of the things of the world, the Church is now entrusted to bring the “Good News to All Creation,” that all is made whole in Christ.

After the Fall and original sin, creation was in chaos. With the new Adam, Jesus Christ, we celebrate a new creation. All who place their “belief in it and accept baptism will be saved.”

The Church, with Jesus as our head, is commissioned to proclaim this Good News.

Question

In what way do you participate in the great commission to proclaim the Good News to all creation?

This Week's Task

As we prepare for the Feast of Pentecost, you are invited to offer the following prayer this week:

Spirit of wisdom and understanding, enlighten our minds to perceive the mysteries of the universe in relation to eternity. Spirit of right judgment and courage, guide us and make us firm in our baptismal decision to follow Jesus' way of love. Spirit of knowledge and reverence, help us to see the lasting value of justice and mercy in our everyday dealings with one another. May we respect life as we work to solve problems of family and nation, economy and ecology. Spirit of God, spark our faith, hope, and love into new action each day. Fill our lives with wonder and awe in Your presence which penetrates all creation. Amen

Prayer

The following prayer may be used.

Leader:

**God ascends amid shouts of joy, Alleluia.
The Lord, amid trumpet blasts, Alleluia.**

Group:

O King of glory, Lord of hosts,
this day You
ascended triumphantly
above all heavens.
Leave us not orphans,
but send upon us the Promise of the Father,
the Spirit of Truth.

Alleluia.

The prayer continues with Psalm 47

Psalm

Response: 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/ Alleluia.

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/ Alleluia.

For king of all the earth is God;
sing hymns of praise.
God reigns over the nations,
God sits upon his holy throne.

R/ Alleluia.

Conclude with an OUR FATHER