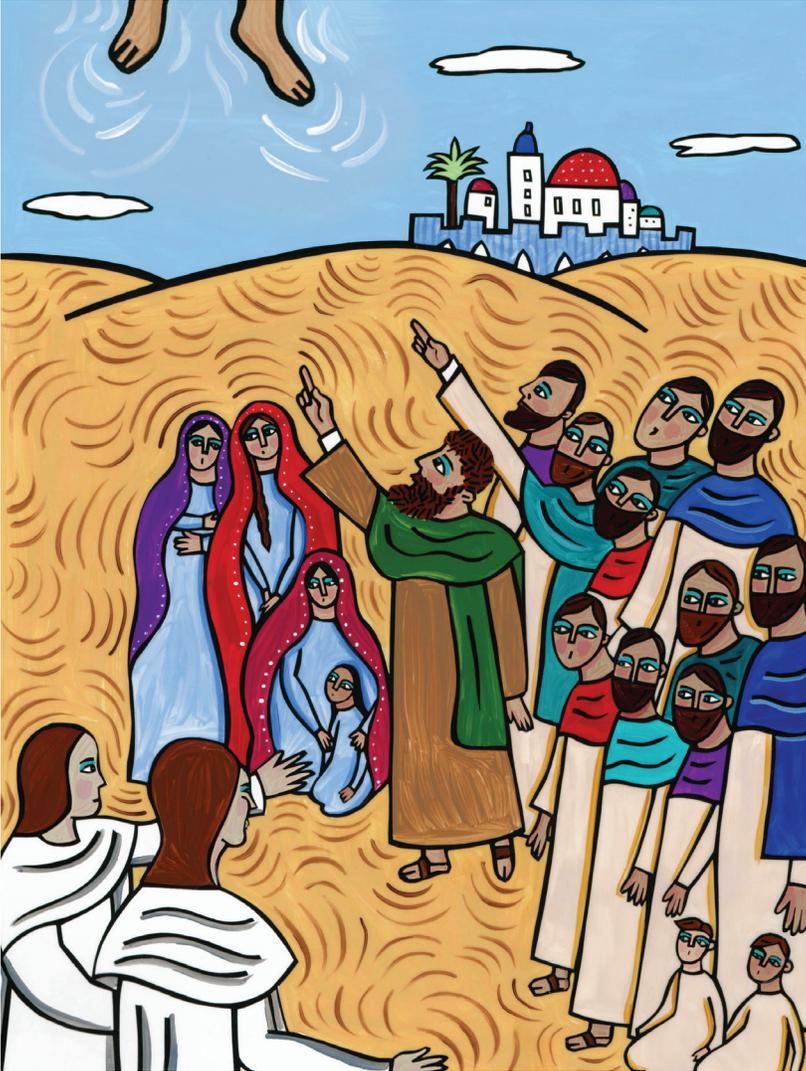


THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD



Witness to the World

Heavenly Father,
who fills our heart with joy
at the Ascension of your Son, Jesus,
inspire us to carry your message
to the corners of our world,
and to be witnesses
in our homes and neighborhoods,
in our places of work and study,
and among all those
who long for your light and life.
Bless our words and actions,
so that those we encounter
may know the happiness and peace
of being your disciple.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Sunday, June 2, 2019
Joyfully Praising God



Today's Readings: Acts 1:1–11; Psalm 47:2–3, 6–7, 8–9; Ephesians 1:17–23; Luke 24:46–53. The reaction of the disciples to Jesus' Ascension was vastly different than to his Crucifixion or even Resurrection. Luke's account in Acts seems to tell us that, at the Ascension, the Apostles were struck with awe, "looking intently" as he left their sight. In the Gospel, Luke writes that the disciples "returned to Jerusalem with great joy, continually in the temple praising God." Such a response is in contrast to their hiding in the upper room. During the forty days since the Resurrection, their faith has matured. Jesus assisted them with their faith as he was present to them, breaking open the Scriptures, filling their nets, granting peace, and breaking bread.

Though for three years they had witnessed his preaching and miracles, they needed this time. Nurtured in their faith, they accompany Jesus to Bethany, where he ascended.

Two thousand years later, disciples are to continue the joyful spirit and praise God in all they do. The disciples received a glimpse of the glory of God the Father on that hill near Bethany, and in their three years accompanying Jesus they have received a glimpse of the Parousia, a time when there will be no more sickness or disease, no death or loss, no hunger or conflict; all things will be made new. We now stand in that time between Christ's glorious Ascension and the resurrection of our body. Until then, it is our mission to spread his Word and baptize in his name.



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, June 3 Courage and Peace

The disciples assure Jesus that they know everything about him and believe he came from God. However, Jesus tells them that they will scatter, leaving him alone in his suffering. In this moment, as he speaks of their abandonment, he comforts them with words of peace and courage. In what area of your life is it difficult to afford the courage to proclaim Jesus as Lord? *Today's Readings: Acts 19:1–8; Psalm 68:2–3, 4–5, 6–7; John 16:29–33.*

Tuesday, June 4 The Glory of God

Jesus' prayer for his disciples is also a prayer for Christians today. Spend some time in prayer today, asking Christ to bless all those followers who have shared and continue to share the Good News of faith with you. Ask Christ to hold close all those who have wandered away and do not feel as though they belong to him. May we be united for the glory of God. *Today's Readings: Acts 20:17–27; Psalm 68:10–11, 20–21; John 17:1–11.*

Wednesday, June 5 Keep Watch over the Flock

The Acts of the Apostles offers a beautiful image of Paul among the elders of the church of Ephesus. After he addresses them, he kneels down and prays with them. They are so moved by his words and the realization that they will not see him again, they begin to weep without restraint and throw their arms around him and kiss him. May our love of God and neighbor move us so that there is no doubt about the work of the Spirit in our heart. *Today's Readings: Acts 20:28–38; Psalm 68:29–30, 33, 35, 35–36; John 17:11–19.*

Thursday, June 6 Hidden Gifts

While praying, Jesus thanks the Father for the gift of his followers. Imagine Jesus' gratitude for human beings who are messy, weak, and flawed. Jesus responds to this gift with a wish that believers be with Jesus and see his glory. Considering that all are a gift to the Son, reflect on the sacredness within each person. *Today's Readings: Acts 22:30; 23:6–11; Psalm 16:1–2, 5, 7–8, 9–10, 11; John 17:20–26.*

Friday, June 7 Ancient Cultures

Ancient cultures often speak of both living well and dying well. It is unusual today to hear people look forward to dying, but what if we knew our final act would give glory to God? That is what Jesus promises Peter regarding his death. Would such knowledge transform the way you live? Have you considered how every moment of our lives, our faith, and our love of the Lord give glory to God? *Today's Readings: Acts 25:13–21; Psalm 103:1–2, 11–12, 19–20; John 21:15–19.*

Saturday, June 8 One Book

Have you ever been so captivated by an experience that time seems to have been suspended? The closing verse of the Gospel hints at this very nature of Jesus Christ. John writes that this book of the Bible is his testimony to the life of Christ. He could have written more but the information about Jesus is more than the books that could be written. More important than words is the relationship that is formed with Christ. Take to heart John's words to grow in love with Christ. *Today's Readings: Acts 28:16–20, 30–31; Psalm 11:4, 5, 7; John 21:20–25.*

