

THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD



Our Advocate

Lord Jesus,
you who ascended into heaven,
grant that we too may see the Father
and rejoice with him in eternal life.
As you sit at the right hand of the Father,
look tenderly at your followers on earth.

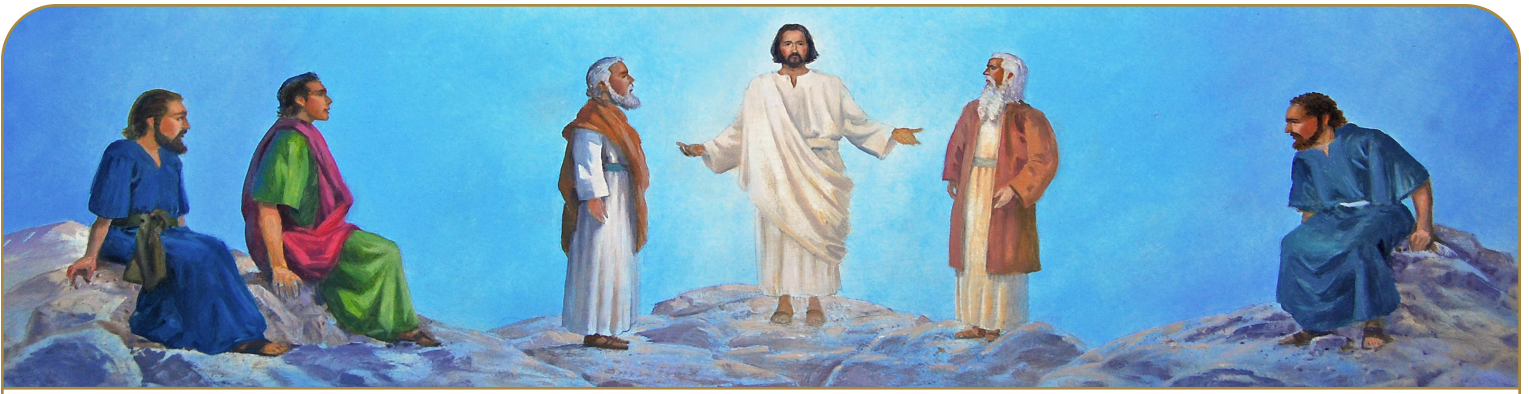
May the Holy Spirit give us the strength
to continue the mission
of spreading the Good News
to all we encounter.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, May 12, 2024
Never Alone



Today's readings: Acts 1:1–11; Psalm 47:2–3, 6–7, 8–9 (6); Ephesians 1:17–23 or Ephesians 4:1–3 or 4:1–7, 11–13; Mark 16:15–20. On Jesus' final day on earth, the disciples might be expected to be sad. They also might be confused about what will occur. Jesus did not attempt to clear their confusion; his intent was to set them on their mission. To the disciples' concern over whether Jesus would restore the kingdom of Israel, he replies, "It is not for you to know. . . . You will be my witnesses . . . to the ends of the earth." Still, they needed to be stirred to action by the angels who asks, "Why are you standing there looking at the sky?"

The Gospel depicts the disciples as being more confident. After hearing that they are to "go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel," the disciples went forth and preached everywhere." In the reading from Ephesians, we hear that the holy ones will be equipped "for the building up of the body of Christ." By our baptism, we have been given a responsibility to continue the building up of the kingdom of God on earth. This week reflect on your role in spreading the Gospel. Are there ways that your parish can help equip you for the mission that is yours? Consider joining a faith formation session or a Bible study group.



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, May 13 Do Not Despair

As we begin this last week of Easter, allow Jesus' words in today's Gospel to echo in your heart: "In the world you will have trouble, but take courage, I have conquered the world." It is easy to say not to be afraid, but that is part of human nature. If we truly trust in God, however, fear should not paralyze us. God is with us. Pray for the spirit to illuminate your heart and fill you with courage in your faith journey. *Today's readings: Acts 19:1–8; Psalm 68:2–3ab, 4–5acd, 6–7ab; John 16:29–33.*

Tuesday, May 14 Continuing the Ministry

"No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends," Jesus tells his disciples in today's Gospel. The depth of God's love that is revealed in Jesus' suffering and death is a model for the love that Christ's followers should exhibit. Examine your sensitivity to the needs of others. Are you willing to reach out, or have you noticed that you are less sensitive to another's suffering? As we become bearers of the message of Christ, may we be living testimony for the world. *Today's readings: Acts 1:15–17, 20–26; Psalm 113:1–2, 3–4, 5–6, 7–8; John 15:9–17.*

Wednesday, May 15 Beware of the Wolves

As Paul prepares the Church at Ephesus for his leaving, he warns the presbyters that wolves will come "to draw the disciples away." This concern that we hear in today's reading from Acts continues today. Wolves can come in the form of false messiahs or as distractions. Consider the attention that you give to obtaining the latest gadgets or fashionable apparel. Who or what distracts you from the life God has called you to? Pray to God to keep distractions from disturbing your focus. *Today's readings: Acts 20:28–38; Psalm 68:29–30, 33–35a, 35bc–36ab; John 17:11b–19.*

Thursday, May 16 Go to Rome

Jesus had shown the disciples that there would be consequences to following him. In Acts today, we read that Paul, who had persecuted Christians before his conversion, is being persecuted for his testimony. The imprisoned Paul does not protest when the Lord tells the disciple that he will continue to bear witness in Rome. Spreading the Gospel sometimes requires leaving our comfort zones. God might call us to unexpected people and places. *Today's readings: Acts 22:30, 23:6–11; Psalm 16:1–2a, 5, 7–8, 9–10, 11; John 17:20–26.*

Friday, May 17 Do You Love Me?

Simon Peter is all of us. How many times have you sinned or walked away from God and returned truly sorry? In the hours before Jesus was crucified, Peter denied our Lord three times. Still, Jesus sought out Peter to ask, "Do you love me?" and to give him the responsibility to "feed my sheep." Can you imagine if Jesus asked if you love him? Do you understand that your baptism gives you a responsibility to spread his Word? Jesus forgives our sins and entrusts us with his mission. *Today's readings: Acts 25:13b–21; Psalm 103:1–2, 11–12, 19–20ab; John 21:15–19.*

Saturday, May 18 Keep Your Focus

The disciples were people like you and me with faults and gifts. They could become distracted with their vocation and inquire about what the future holds for another. When Peter asked about the disciple whom Jesus loved, our Lord replied, "What concern is it of yours? You follow me." In our parish communities, people can be distracted by what is not their concern. Take care to be attentive to your role and vocation. *Today's readings: Acts 28:16–20, 30–31; Psalm 11:4, 5, 7; John 21:20–25.*

