



12 May 2024

Solemnity of the Ascension

Year B

58TH WORLD COMMUNICATION'S SUNDAY
MOTHER'S DAY

Tasked to Build God's Kingdom

Jesus' ascension marks the climax of his glorification, but it does not mean that he has severed his relationship with us. It only means that, while still remaining the great "protagonist" in the history of salvation, Jesus recedes for a time into the background to let the members of the Church play their role in the construction of God's Kingdom with a greater sense of responsibility.

All of us are involved in this great enterprise which is the core of God's plan for mankind. We do our share in it by contributing to the proclamation of the Gospel and by making the Kingdom present through a life of authentic Christian witness.

Today we also observe the 58th World Communications Sunday. Let us keep in our prayers all the Media practitioners, social media influencers, and the recipients of (and all those affected by) their service.

This is also a wonderful opportunity to show our love and gratitude to our mother, as we celebrate Mother's Day. We will do that not only by offering them flowers and hugs, but also by praying for them, especially in this Eucharistic celebration.



INTRODUCTORY RITES



Entrance Antiphon

(To be recited only when no Entrance Hymn is sung.)

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!

Greeting

P – In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit!

All–Amen!

P –Blessed be Jesus, our glorious Lord, who ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand

of the Father. May his grace and peace be with you all!

All–And with your spirit!

Penitential Act

P –As we prepare ourselves to celebrate the ascension into heaven of the Risen Christ, let us reflect on what prevents us from soaring high in our spiritual life.
(Pause)

P –You are exalted at the right hand of the Father. Lord, have mercy!

All–Lord, have mercy!

P –You are the hope of all the living and the dead. Christ, have mercy!

All–Christ, have mercy!

P –You sent your apostles to preach the Good News to

all nations. Lord, have mercy!

All–Lord, have mercy!

P –May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

All–Amen!

Gloria

All–Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world,

have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen!

Collect (Opening Prayer)

P – 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, God, for ever and ever.

All—Amen!



1st Reading *Acts 1:1-11*
The book of the Acts of the Apostles begins where the gospels of Mark and Luke end: the ascension of Jesus into heaven. He leaves his disciples with the promise of the Holy Spirit and the mission to be his witnesses to the ends of the earth.

R – A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

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 as you have seen him going into heaven.”

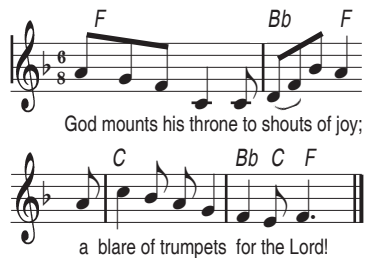
The Word of the Lord!

All—Thanks be to God!

Responsorial Psalm *Ps 47*

R – *God mounts his throne to shouts of joy; a blare of trumpets for the Lord!*

R. M. Velez



* 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.

2nd Reading *Eph 4:1-13*

Here is a beautiful prayer of petition and a reflection on the exaltation of Christ above every principality and power.

R – A reading from the Letter of Paul to the Ephesians

Brothers and sisters:

I, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to live in a manner worthy of the call you have received, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love, striving to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace: one body and one Spirit, as you were also called to the one hope of your call; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift. Therefore, it says: He ascended on high and took prisoners captive; he gave gifts to men. What does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended into the lower regions of the earth? The one who descended is also the one who ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.

And he gave some as apostles, others as prophets, others as evangelists, others as pastors and teachers, to equip the holy ones for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the extent of the full stature of Christ.

The Word of the Lord!

All—Thanks be to God!

Gospel Acclamation

All—Alleluia! Alleluia!

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

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Gospel *Mk 16:15-20*
The episode of Jesus' ascension into heaven brings to a close his visible presence among his disciples. At the same time, it ushers in the "Time of the Church" which is the direct continuation of the evangelizing and saving mission of Christ.

P –The Lord be with you!

All –**And with your spirit!**

P –A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark

All –**Glory to you, O Lord!**

Jesus said to his disciples: "Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved. Whoever does not believe will be condemned.

These signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will drive out demons, they will speak new languages. They will pick up serpents with their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not harm them. They will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."

So then the Lord Jesus, after he spoke to them, was taken up into heaven and took his seat at the right hand of God.

But they went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word through accompanying signs.

The Gospel of the Lord!

All –**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!**

Homily

Profession of Faith

(Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed)

All –I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, (*bow*)* and by the Holy

Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.* For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen!

Prayer of the Faithful

P –The Ascension of our Lord reminds us of our final destiny. It also reminds us of our duty to work in building God's Kingdom on earth through a life of unwavering Christian commitment. Aware of all our limitations and weaknesses, we pray:

All –**Christ, Lord and Savior, hear us!**

C –That the Church and her leaders may faithfully accomplish their mission to lead the whole of mankind in a continuous moral and spiritual progress, let us pray! **R.**

C –That those who feel so attracted to earthly values as to forget the heavenly ones may find in our good example an invitation to raise the level of their aspirations, let us pray! **R.**

C –That all those who have reached the bottom of human perversion may heed the call of the ascending Christ to a sincere conversion, let us pray! **R.**

C –That all the media practitioners and all those involved in the world of social communication may practice their profession effectively for the upliftment of all human beings, and for the

promotion of peace and justice throughout the world, let us pray! **R.**

C –That all the mothers throughout the world may have the strength and good health to fulfill their duties with loving dedication, let us pray! **R.**

C –That all religious women and men, and seminarians, may grow in their own vocations through their human, pastoral, spiritual and community formation, leading them to be credible witnesses to the Gospel. Let us pray! **R.**

P –Lord Jesus, keep our hearts set on the "great hope" to which you calls us. May we do our best to promote on earth the Kingdom of justice, peace and love which you came to establish, and in which you live and reign for ever and ever.

All –**Amen!**



Preparation of the Gifts

P –Pray, brethren . . .

All –**May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands, for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.**

Prayer over the Offerings

P –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.

All –**Amen!**

Preface of Ascension I

P –The Lord be with you!

All –**And with your spirit!**

P –Lift up your hearts!

All –**We lift them up to the Lord!**

P –Let us give thanks to the Lord our God!

All –**It is right and just!**

P –It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father,

almighty and eternal God.

For the Lord Jesus, the King of glory, conqueror of sin and death, ascended today to the highest heavens, as the Angels gazed in wonder.

Mediator between God and man, judge of the world and Lord of hosts, he ascended, not to distance himself from our lowly state but that we, his members, might be confident of following where he, our Head and Founder, has gone before.

Therefore, overcome with paschal joy, every land, every people exults in your praise and even the heavenly Powers, with the angelic hosts, sing together the unending hymn of your glory, as they acclaim:

All—Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest!

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!

Memorial Acclamation

P –The mystery of faith!

All—We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again!

COMMUNION RITE



All—Our Father . . .

P –Deliver us, Lord . . .

All—For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever.

Sign of Peace

Breaking of the Bread

All—Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: have mercy on us. (2x)

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: grant us peace.

Communion

P –This is the Lamb of God who ascended into heaven after offering his life to take away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the Supper of the Lamb.

***All*—Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.**

Communion Antiphon

(To be recited only when no Communion Hymn is sung.)

Behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age, alleluia!

Prayer after Communion

P –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.

All—Amen!

CONCLUDING RITES



P –The Lord be with you.

All—And with your spirit!

P –Bow your heads and pray for God’s blessing. *(Pause)*

–Jesus has taken his seat at the right hand of the Father. May you have the joy of experiencing that he is also with you till the end of time.

All—Amen!

P –May almighty God look with love on you this day when his only Son ascended into heaven to prepare a place for you.

All—Amen!

P –May you be strengthened by God’s grace as you fulfill your task to be heralds and witnesses of the Gospel.

All—Amen!

P –May almighty God bless you: the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

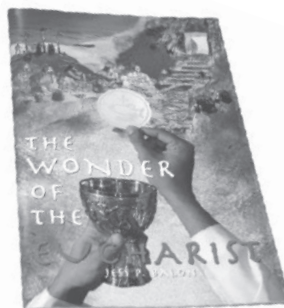
All—Amen!

P –Go in the peace of the glorified Christ.

All—Thanks be to God!

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EMPOWERED, NOT ABANDONED!

Kalakbay at Katoto

It is easy to fall into the temptation of thinking that the Ascension of the Lord has to do with good-byes, with departures, with going away, with disappearance of someone we hold dear – never to be seen anymore. It is easy to think that such a departure means loss, a certain deprivation, an impoverishment. Such a thought would be a perfect story line for telenovelas, perfect for a society like ours, which, owing to labor migration, may be said to be a people in *diaspora*, for whom physical separation counts among our set of daily experiences. Who among us does not have a relative who lives and works somewhere else?

Departures connote disappearance from sight, and disappearance entails sadness. But today's solemnity has nothing to do with either of the two. Ascension is not about disappearance from sight, but all about a new presence. Ascension is not about endings but about new beginnings. Ascension is not about good-byes, but about ongoing good news! Ascension is not about sadness, but about joy. **Ascension is not about disappointment but it is about an appointment with truth.**

What sort of truth does the Ascension offer us?

I would like you all to look back at the immediately preceding days up until yesterday. The Gospel readings, all taken from the Gospel according to John, chapter 16, speak of Jesus preparing his disciples for two other aspects of the mystery of his glorification connected with his resurrection: his ascension and the sending of the Holy Spirit. Last Monday, we heard him speak about “endurance in the face of persecution” because of the Spirit whom he would send. On Tuesday, he spoke about “returning to the Father” and the sending of the Paraclete. Last Wednesday, we were told about who this Paraclete is, “the spirit of truth who will come and guide [us] into all the truth.” On Thursday, the Lord assured us saying that “in a short while we would lose sight of him, but soon [we] would see him again.” On Friday, he was more specific: “after suffering for a while, Jesus will return and transform pain into joy that no one can take away from us.” And yesterday, we were reminded that no longer would the disciples ask questions nor would

Jesus speak in veiled language. All of Jesus’ teachings would be seen in a new, direct and wondrous way.

Today, Scriptures tell us: “*as they were looking on, he was lifted up and a cloud took him from their sight.*” (Acts 1:9) “*So then the Lord Jesus, after he spoke to them, was taken up into heaven and took his seat at the right hand of God.*” (Mk 16:19)

Based on the carefully sequenced set of readings, then, it is clear that at least biblically, the ascension of the Lord is not about disappearance, but about a promise of ongoing, albeit new, presence of the Lord in our midst. It is not about endings, but about a new power given to us his disciples. St. Paul describes this power of his presence to us thus: “*This power working in us is the same as the 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.*”

All this is matter for hope, I guess. Every day, we face that great temptation to make our daily lives come close indeed to, and reflect the reality presented by telenovelas and soap operas in our times: endless psychic pain that comes with a series of never-ending twists and turns in the story line. This may well explain the popularity of telenovelas. It may well be a case of life imitating art, (or art imitating life!)

The lesson of today's liturgy seems clear enough for us all. No, there is no room for hopelessness, no room for despair and sadness. There is no reason for us to feel left in the lurk. Ascension tells us today to claim that power that has been given us by Jesus died, risen and ascended to the Father's right hand. Perhaps the words of the angels could help us here: “*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 as you have seen him going into heaven.*” (Acts 1:10-11) Why sulk? Why wallow in despair? Why grovel or shrivel in sadness? Why stand there petrified and paralyzed? Rise up in hope. Rise up in a fresh resolve to live fully. **The Lord is risen and ascended, not to disappear, but to be with us in a new way, for in truth, we are all now empowered, not abandoned!**