

MASS INTENTIONS THIS WEEKEND

SAT 5:00 pm	5/23	Holy Spirit Church and Parishioners, All People Suffering from Illness
SUN 10:00 am	5/24	Holy Spirit Church and Parishioners, Joseph Loi Tran, Ngo & Nguyen Family Living and Deceased, All People Suffering from Illness

MASS INTENTIONS NEXT WEEKEND

SAT 5:00 pm	5/30	Holy Spirit Church and Parishioners, All People Suffering from Illness
SUN 10:00 am	5/31	Holy Spirit Church and Parishioners, Joseph Loi Tran, Ngo & Nguyen Family Living and Deceased, All People Suffering from Illness

WEEKDAYS

MON 5/25	All Souls & The Conversion of Sinners
TUE 5/26	Kenneth Bonaparte
WED 5/27	Kenny Perdue, Jr.
THU 5/28	Thanksgiving
FRI 5/29	Victims of Pandemic.

The Ascension of the Lord Lectionary

Reading 1 - *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 as you have seen him going into heaven.**"

Reading 2 - *Eph 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.**

Gospel - *Mt 28:16-20* - *All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.*

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 Ascension of the Lord

We celebrate the Lord's Ascension, taking place forty days after the Resurrection. We recount with joy the day Christ completed His earthly mission and returned to the Father to reign in majesty and to be the judge of the living and the dead. It seems we just began our Paschal celebrations and now this joyful liturgical season is drawing to a close.

That is how life often goes, cycle after cycle, what has been called "an infinity of little hours." Precisely there, in the midst of the mundane, we are being invited to encounter the God who has not left us orphans but lives among us and who loves us until the end of time.

Who can fully grasp the intensity, the depth, the mystery of the Lord's Ascension? Certainly not I. But all of us are being invited to reflect on the tremendous act of God's redeeming love in Jesus Christ, who suffered, died, rose and ascended on high, that all might be made free and partakers in God's life forever.

Christ completed the Father's work on earth as a mission of obedience to the will of God. Its purpose was and is to bring eternal life to every human being. We may ask: how do I feel about Christ's obedience unto death, how does it touch me, and what role do I play in the mystery being celebrated on Ascension of the Lord? What is being asked of me as a follower of Christ?

Perhaps we may feel little or nothing of note to reply to these questions, but we must not think for a moment that the saving events of Christ's life, death, Resurrection and Ascension have no meaning in our lives. We are all united to Christ and one another in the great mystery of salvation in Jesus Christ. We have "put on Christ," Saint Paul tells us, by the fact of our Baptism, so we cannot so easily walk away from the light and life being offered us in the Church. Of course we have free will and cannot be stopped from rejecting God's call, but the challenge is to cultivate God's life within us in order to bear lasting fruit.

We all must learn throughout our earthly sojourn what it means to really belong to Christ, to forget ourselves that others may have, to take up our cross each day and embrace our vocation without compromise. We are asked to follow the Lord without fear or regret. This is no easy task, but with the help of God's Holy Spirit, the promised Comforter, we can make progress in virtue and humility, asked of us by our having "put on Christ" at Baptism.

How might we be witnesses of Christ and fulfill the mission given to His followers before the Ascension and to each of us today? There is a phrase which perhaps sums up well the challenge of discipleship then and now: to be "honest and authentic in our lives," which means seeking to do good and to be attentive to the interior voice of our conscience. We must all strive to be more genuine in our response of the Lord to go forth and bear fruit, born of real love.

In the celebration of the Lord's Ascension we rejoice greatly for the assurance that future glory is realized in Jesus Christ and offered to the human race. This gift encourages us to desire deeply and always the glory of heaven. We wish to go to heaven where Christ has gone. The apostles are asked by the angels, "Why are you gazing in astonishment at the sky? Just as you have seen Him ascend into heaven, so, in like manner, shall He return" (Acts 1.11).

In the meantime, we are asked to put our hands to work and our hearts to God, doing the will of God in preparation for the return of our Savior at our death and at Christ's Second Coming in glory at the end of time.

The Sacrament of the Eucharist is the source of strength for those who witness to Christ. We celebrate the Eucharist to dispose ourselves more completely to all that God has in store for those whom God loves and who love God. We ideally gather in a place of worship, where we ponder God's mercy, learning how the suffering of Christ becomes a way to glory. Where Christ has gone we hope to follow. Each liturgical action is meant to lift us up further in joy and wonder for everything that God has accomplished on our behalf in Jesus Christ.

The Risen and Ascended Christ now reigns over creation, enabling the followers of Jesus to use their spiritual gifts for building up the body of Christ, the Church. The Ascension is linked to the Church's mission in all ages and is part of the dynamism that makes Christ known from generation to generation, to the ends of the earth. May we never cease to thank God for bestowing such great gifts upon us individually and as a Church.

We are convinced that the Lord Jesus will come again in glory. Christ's fullness fills the universe already and God distributes the wealth of a glorious heritage and the immeasurable scope of divine power to all who believe (see Ephesians 1:19). © 2020 *The Monastery of Christ in the Desert*

