

Reflecting On Sunday's Readings

The Ascension of the Lord Sunday — May 24, 2020

First Reading — Acts 1:1-11

¹ In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, ² until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commandment through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. ³ To them he presented himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days, and speaking of the kingdom of God. ⁴ And while staying with them he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me, ⁵ for John baptized with water, but before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.” ⁶ So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” ⁷ He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority. ⁸ But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth.” ⁹ And when he had said this, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰ And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, ¹¹ and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 47:2-3, 6-7, 8-9

R. (6) God mounts his throne to shouts of joy: a blare of trumpets for the Lord.

or:

R. 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. God mounts his throne to shouts of joy: a blare of trumpets for the Lord.

or:

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. God mounts his throne to shouts of joy: a blare of trumpets for the Lord.

or:

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. God mounts his throne to shouts of joy: a blare of trumpets for the Lord.

or:

R. Alleluia.

Second Reading — Ephesians 1:17-23

¹⁷ ... that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, ¹⁸ having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power in us who believe, according to the working of his great might ²⁰ which he accomplished in Christ when he raised him from the dead and made him sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that

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which is to come; ²² and he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, ²³ which is his body, the fulness of him who fills all in all.

Gospel Reading — Matthew 28:16-20

¹⁶ Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷ And when they saw him they worshiped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ 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, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.”

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INVITATION TO PRAY

Pause for a few moments of silence and enter more deeply into the presence of God...

Proclaim the Scriptures out loud

As you listen to the scriptures be attentive to a word, a phrase, a question, an image, or a feeling that emerges. Reflect on this quietly or share it aloud.

INVITATION TO REFLECT

INVITATION TO GROUP SHARING

First Reading — Acts 1:1-11

1. What areas of your witnessing responsibilities do Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria encompass?

Second Reading — Ephesians 1:17-23

2. How do you think this prayer of St. Paul's is accomplished in Christians' hearts today?
3. What is the relationship between possessing this wisdom and enlightenment and having a heart to tell others about Jesus and salvation?

Gospel Reading — Matthew 28:16-20

4. These were the last words the Lord spoke prior to his Ascension. Why should that fact be important to us?
5. This command was given to the Apostles, and thus to the Church. Inasmuch as you are also part of "Church" how should, or how are you, responding to this command?

INVITATION TO ACT

Determine a specific action (individual or group) that flows from your sharing. When choosing an individual action, determine what you will do and share it with the group. When choosing a group action, determine who will take responsibility for different aspects of the action. These should be your primary considerations.

CLOSING INVITATION TO PRAY

Give thanks to God (aloud or silently) for new insights, for desires awakened, for directions clarified, for the gift of one another's openness and sensitivity. Conclude with a final prayer.