

Men of Galilee,
why are you standing there looking up at the sky?
This Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven
will return in the same way.

ACTS 1:11

THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD

MAY 16, 2021

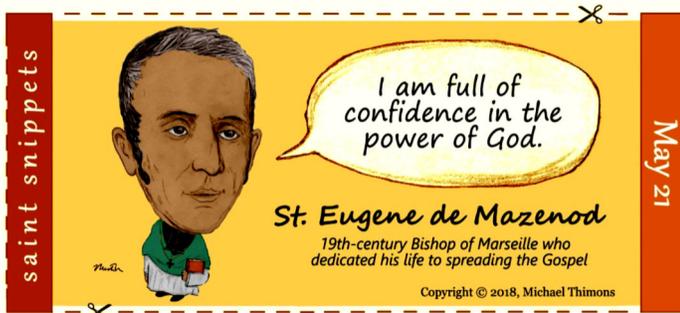
Feast of Faith

The General Intercessions

The general intercessions were restored to the liturgy in the reforms that followed the Second Vatican Council. In these prayers—also known as the “universal prayer” or “prayer of the faithful”—the assembly prays for the Church, the world, and the local community. As the name “prayer of the faithful” reminds us, these intercessions are a privilege of the baptized, which is why any catechumens are dismissed before the Creed and the intercessions. In baptism, we become members of a royal priesthood, and what do priests do? They intercede; they pray. In standing to pray to God as a community, we are living out our royal priesthood.

The intercessions at Mass usually follow a clear pattern, moving from general to specific needs. We pray for the whole Church. We pray for the world and for our nation. We pray for our local community, for those who have died and for all the sick and afflicted. In our united prayer, we reach beyond ourselves and our own needs and grow in awareness of and compassion for the needs of others.

—Corinna Laughlin, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.



The Significance Of The Ascension

The theological unity, or perhaps even the temporal experience of the early community, made it seem that Jesus' resurrection and his ascension were inseparable aspects of a single mystery. Only in the later writings of Luke and John has further theological reflection helped the Christian community to distinguish different dimensions of the mystery. Liturgical tradition has followed the forty-day chronology formulated by Luke. We would miss the point, however, if we were to demand a precise historical chronology of events such as the Resurrection-Ascension that are primarily spiritual in nature and that clearly surpass the bounds of time and space as we know them.

What is important for us to grasp is the significance of the Ascension. For Luke, it is the decisive turning point that marks the end of Jesus' earthly ministry and the beginning of the disciples' Spirit-led ministry and thus the ministry of the whole church down to our own day. Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

Readings for the Week

Monday:	Acts 19:1-8; Ps 68:2-3ab, 4-5acd, 6-7ab; Jn 16:29-33
Tuesday:	Acts 20:17-27; Ps 68:10-11, 20-21; Jn 17:1-11a
Wednesday:	Acts 20:28-38; Ps 68:29-30, 33-36ab; Jn 17:11b-19
Thursday:	Acts 22:30; 23:6-11; Ps 16:1-2a, 5, 7-11; Jn 17:20-26
Friday:	Acts 25:13b-21; Ps 103:1-2, 11-12, 19-20ab; Jn 21:15-19
Saturday:	Acts 28:16-20, 30-31; Ps 11:4, 5, 7; Jn 21:20-25
Sunday:	Vigil: Gn 11:1-9 or Ex 19:3-8a, 16-20b or Ez 37:1-14 or Jl 3:1-5; Ps 104:1-2, 24, 35, 27-30; Rom 8:22-27; Jn 7:37-39 Day: Acts 2:1-11; Ps 104:1, 24, 29-31, 34; 1 Cor 12:3b-7, 12-13 or Gal 5:16-25; Jn 20:19-23 or Jn 15:26-27; 16:12-15

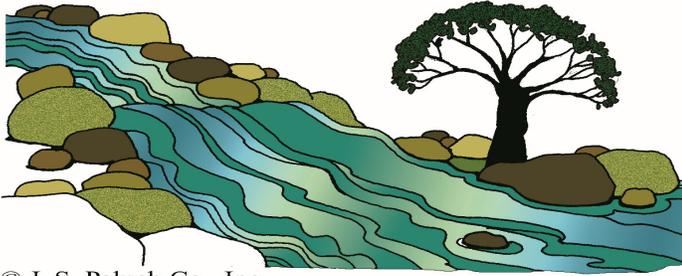
Saints and Special Observances

Sunday:	The Ascension of the Lord; World Communications Day; Shavuot (Jewish observance) begins at sundown
Tuesday:	St. John I
Thursday:	St. Bernardine of Siena; Julian Calendar Ascension
Friday:	St. Christopher Magellanes and Companions
Saturday:	St. Rita of Cascia; Vigil of Pentecost



Today's Readings

First Reading — This Jesus will return in the same way as you have seen him going into heaven (Acts 1:1-11).
Psalm — God mounts his throne to shouts of joy: a blare of trumpets for the Lord (Psalm 47).
Second Reading — God seated Jesus at his right hand in the heavens (Ephesians 1:17-23) or Ephesians 4:1-13 [1-7, 11-13].
Gospel — The Lord Jesus was taken up into heaven and took his seat at the right hand of God (Mark 16:15-20). The English translation of the Psalm Responses from the Lectionary for Mass © 1969, 1981, 1997, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation. All rights reserved.



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The Ascension of the Lord May 16, 2021

Whoever believes and is baptized
Will be saved.

—Mark 16:16

Treasures From Our Tradition

Today's celebration varies from place to place. In some parts of the United States, people gather for the Seventh Sunday of Easter, while other places celebrate the Ascension of the Lord. Several years ago, regions of bishops were permitted to decide whether to retain Ascension Day on Thursday, the fortieth day after Easter, or to move the celebration to the nearest Sunday. This new flexibility in the Christian calendar has to do with the desire to gather the Church to celebrate its central feasts fully, and with the Eucharist. Increasingly, as priests serve remote and scattered parishes, this is not always possible mid-week.

The Ascension is a key moment for grasping what life in Christ is all about. It is not about a departure, but rather a plan for presence. We who are nourished by the Lord's body and blood in the Eucharist are transformed to be his abiding presence in the world. That is a truth so worth celebrating that we can adjust our calendar in order that the fullest possible gathering of the Church can be achieved.

—James Field, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

The Ascension of the Lord Exalted in Glory

All three readings talk about Jesus being taken up into heaven or in a cloud or on high. Remember that in the Old Testament, a cloud was a sign of God's presence. So these descriptions of the ascension actually tell us that Jesus is reunited with his Father and exalted in glory with the Father. Jesus not only has a new life that cannot be ended by death, he also is no longer limited by time or space as he was before he died. So what does that mean for us?

Because he is not limited, he can be with us everywhere. So everything we do for him (being patient with a child or elderly person, caring for the poor or the sick, forgiving someone who hurt us) is done with Jesus. Through his Spirit, he gives us the power and the courage to act as Jesus and the vision of faith to see Jesus in others.

Seeing Jesus in others takes some practice. Think of it as a learning process. One way we learn is through the lives of the saints. They start out as ordinary people who give their lives to Jesus. As we read or hear about them, we see how God works through them to do great things. We learn that they become more and more like Jesus, in how they treat others with love

and respect.

But if the saints seem too distant, we can look at someone we love. Whether it is a parent, spouse, brother, sister or friend, the good that they do and the love they show is from God. So we can learn about God's love for us by letting ourselves be loved by another. Take time to thank God for those who love you and ask him to open your eyes to see Jesus in them.

The other side of the coin is seeing Jesus in ourselves. We may have to forgive ourselves for the bad choices we have made in the past, or the bad habits we still have. We also have to accept that God really does love us as his children. And we have to accept that sometimes, even when we do our best, we still seem to fail. Remember, to the world of Jesus' time, he looked like a failure: He was executed as a criminal, his few followers all went into hiding, and the one he picked as his successor (Peter) denied even knowing him. But the God who brings life out of death also brings success out of failure. So trust his promise that we have Jesus in us. Then do your best to follow Jesus and you may lead someone else to him.

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