

Ascension of the Lord

SOLEMNITY

Pope's prayer intention for June

Evangelisation: That priests, through the modesty and humility of their lives, commit themselves actively to a solidarity with those who are more poor.

BE STILL

- Take a moment to allow whatever is in your heart to rise and offer your thoughts to the loving care of the Lord today.
 - Sing, play or listen to '[Alleluia, Sing to Jesus](#)'—AOV I 191, CWBII 449, GA 371. (This hymn was written by William Chatterton Dix (1837–1898) as a communion hymn for Ascension Sunday.)
1. Alleluia! sing to Jesus! his the sceptre, his the throne;
Alleluia! his the triumph, his the victory alone.
Hark! the songs of peaceful Zion thunder like a mighty flood;
'Jesus out of ev'ry nation has redeemed us by his blood.
 2. Alleluia! not as orphans are we left in sorrow now;
Alleluia! he is near us; faith believes, nor questions how.
Though the cloud from sight received him, when the forty days
were o'er,
shall our hearts forget his promise, 'I am with you evermore'?
 3. Alleluia! bread of angels, here on earth our food, our stay!
Alleluia! here the sinful flee to you from day to day.
Intercessor, friend of sinners, earth's redeemer, plead for me,
where the songs of all the sinless sweep across the crystal sea.
 4. Alleluia! King eternal, you the Lord of lords we own;
Alleluia! born of Mary, earth thy footstool, heav'n your throne.
You within the veil have entered robed in flesh, our great
high priest;
Here on earth both priest and victim in the eucharistic feast.

Gathering prayer:

Sit with the words of Sunday's entrance antiphon:
Men of Galilee,
Why gaze in wonder at the heavens?
Jesus whom you saw ascending into heaven
Will return as you saw him go, alleluia.

GOSPEL

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke:

Jesus said to his disciples: 'You see how it is written that the Christ would suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that, in his name, repentance for the forgiveness of sins would be preached to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses to this.

And now I am sending down to you what the Father has promised. Stay in the city then, until you are clothed with the power from on high.'

Then he took them out as far as the outskirts of Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. Now as he blessed them, he withdrew from and was carried up to heaven. They worshipped him and then went back to Jerusalem full of joy; and they were continually in the Temple praising God.

—Luke 24:46–53

The Gospel of the Lord.

Ponder:

Re-read the gospel. Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013) noted that in the presence of God, during a recollected reading of the text, it is good to practice *lectio divina*—the reading of God's word in prayer asking that it 'enlighten and renew' us. The following questions may help with this:

- Lord, what does this text mean to me?
- What is it about my life that you want me to change in response to this text?
- What troubles me about this text?
- Why am I not interested in this?
- What do I find pleasant about this text?
- What is it about this word that moves me?
- What attracts me?
- Why does it attract me?

Reflect:

St. Luke mentions that the Apostles, after seeing Jesus ascend into Heaven, return to Jerusalem 'with great joy'. This seems a little strange to us. "Usually, when we are separated from our family members, from our friends, definitively, and especially when caused by death, we are naturally sad because ... we can no longer enjoy ... their presence. Instead, the Evangelist emphasises the Apostles' profound joy. Why? Precisely because, with the gaze of faith, they understand that, even if gone from view, Jesus remains always with them. He does not abandon them and, in the Father's glory, He sustains them, guides them, and intercedes for them."

—Pope Francis, general audience,
Saint Peter's Square, 17 April 2013

We all struggle with absence—and no one must have felt this more keenly than our ancestors as they came to an understanding of Jesus being present to them in a new and different way. Yet the message of Jesus is about promise in absence! It is about the joy of blessing in the midst of whatever our daily lives may hold for us. Perhaps this week offers the opportunity to reflect on where we see the presence of Jesus alive in our midst. This in essence is how we live in Christian hope. We are hopeful because we know that Jesus lives.

PRAY

God, as we journey toward the end of this Easter Season, bless us with a spirit of wisdom and joy. Encourage us to keep our eyes fixed on you as we continue in our efforts to live as pilgrim people. Amen.