

The Ascension of the Lord

13th May 2018 Readings

FIRST READING

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles 1:1-11

In my earlier work, Theophilus, I dealt with everything Jesus had done and taught from the beginning until the day he gave his instructions to the apostles he had chosen through the Holy Spirit, and was taken up to heaven. He had shown himself alive to them after his Passion by many demonstrations: for forty days he had continued to appear to them and tell them about the kingdom of God. When he had been at table with them, he had told them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for what the Father had promised. 'It is' he had said 'what you have heard me speak about: John baptised with water but you, not many days from now, will be baptised with the Holy Spirit.'

Now having met together, they asked him, 'Lord, has the time come? Are you going to restore the kingdom to Israel?' He replied, 'It is not for you to know times or dates that the Father has decided by his own authority, but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and then you will be my witnesses not only in Jerusalem but throughout Judaea and Samaria, and indeed to the ends of the earth.'

As he said this he was lifted up while they looked on, and a cloud took him from their sight. They were still staring into the sky when suddenly two men in white were standing near them and they said, 'Why are you men from Galilee standing here looking into the sky? Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven, this same Jesus will come back in the same way as you have seen him go there.'

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 46:2-3. 6-9. Response v.6.

R/. God goes up with shouts of joy; the Lord goes up with trumpet blast.

All peoples, clap your hands,
cry to God with shouts of joy!
For the Lord, the Most High, we must fear,
great king over all the earth. **R/.**

God goes up with shouts of joy;
the Lord goes up with trumpet blast.
Sing praise for God, sing praise,
sing praise to our king, sing praise. **R/.**

God is king of all the earth,
sing praise with all your skill.
God is king over the nations;
God reigns on his holy throne. **R/.**

SECOND READING

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Ephesians 4:1-13

I, the prisoner in the Lord, implore you to lead a life worthy of your vocation. Bear with one another charitably, in complete selflessness, gentleness and patience. Do all you can to preserve the unity of the Spirit by the peace that binds you together. There is one Body, one Spirit, just as you were all called into one and the same hope when you were called. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God who is Father of all, over all, through all and within all. Each one of us, however, has been given his own share of grace, given as Christ allotted it. It was said that he would:

When he ascended to the height, he captured prisoners, he gave gifts to men.

When it says, 'he ascended', what can it mean if not that he descended right down to the lower regions of the earth? The one who rose higher than all the heavens to fill all things is none other than the one who descended. And to some, his gift was that they should be apostles; to some, prophets; to some, evangelists; to some, pastors and teachers; so that the saints together make a unity in the work of service, building up the body of Christ. In this way we are all to come to unity in our faith and in our knowledge of the Son of God, until we become the perfect Man, fully mature with the fullness of Christ himself.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (Matthew 28:19-20)

*Alleluia, alleluia!
Go, make disciples of all the nations;
I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.
Alleluia!*

GOSPEL (Mark 16: 15-20)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.
Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus showed himself to the Eleven, and said to them: 'Go out to the whole world; proclaim the Good News to all creation. He who believes and is baptised will be saved; he who does not believe will be condemned. These are the signs that will be associated with believers: in my name they will cast out devils; they will have the gift of tongues; they will pick up snakes in their hands, and be unharmed should they drink deadly poison; they will lay their hands on the sick, who will recover.'

And so the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven: there at the right hand of God he took his place, while they, going out, preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word by the signs that accompanied it.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.



The Ascension of the Lord

Lectionary Year B

the word of god

saint of the week

“Why are you men from Galilee standing here looking into the sky?”

The Feast of the Ascension gives us the opportunity to reflect on God’s saving power in our lives. Not only did he create the universe, he also graciously re-created us in Christ. Before Jesus ascended back to his Father, he gave us a commission (as today’s Gospel from Mark tells us) to “go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature.” This means we are called to be busy about sharing our faith.

In our first reading (from the Acts of the Apostles), after the account of the Lord’s Ascension, the angel says to the apostles: “Why are you men from Galilee standing here looking into the sky?” The implication is that there is work to be done. Earlier in the passage, Jesus tells his closest associates that the Holy Spirit will soon come upon them to give them power to be their Lord’s witnesses beginning in Jerusalem and eventually to the ends of the earth. So the angel is telling the apostles: there is no time to waste here – get started on your mission. This message is also for us – and for all disciples throughout history. There is no time for standing around and navel gazing. We have the vocation as the church (as the Body of Christ) to carry out Jesus’ commission.

St Theresa of Avila put it this way: “Christ has no body here on earth but yours now, no hands but yours, no feet but yours; your eyes are the eyes through which Christ looks compassionately on the world. Yours are the feet with which he is to go about doing good, and yours are the hands with which he is to bless us now.”

prayer of the week

A Prayer for “Thy Kingdom Come”

Almighty God,
your ascended Son has sent us into the world
to preach the good news of your kingdom:
inspire us with your Spirit
and fill our hearts with the fire of your love,
that all who hear your Word
may be drawn to you,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Saturday 19th May 2018

St Dunstan (909 - 988)



Dunstan was a Benedictine monk, reformer and Archbishop of Canterbury. He was born near Glastonbury and educated at the abbey. He joined the king’s household, but was soon expelled from court, accused of being a magician. Later he was ordained priest at Winchester. He returned to Glastonbury briefly but was soon recalled to court. King Edmund

took a great interest in Glastonbury, and when the abbacy fell vacant he appointed Dunstan as abbot. Dunstan set about restoring monastic life, which had been almost extinguished under Danish invasions, and this is considered to be one of his greatest achievements.

In 995 his fortunes changed again, and through intrigue at court he was exiled to Mont Blandin (Ghent), and he saw for the first time a reformed monastery of the continent. Recalled by King Edgar, he became successively Bishop of Worcester, Bishop of London and Archbishop of Canterbury. He composed the Coronation Rite for King Edgar at Bath, which is the basis of the Coronation Rite still in use. So began the fruitful collaboration between King and Archbishop which reformed the Church in England, largely through the monastic orders, and was regarded after the Conquest as a ‘golden age’. The promulgation of *Regularis Concordia* in about 970 marked the success of the movement Dunstan had started in Glastonbury years before. He collaborated with the king in making laws, administering justice and reforming the Church, and remained active until he died, at Canterbury, on 19 May 988. After his death his cult grew rapidly, and under Anselm’s rule it became nationwide. He was one of the most popular Anglo-Saxon saints, and many legends have grown up around him.