



The Catholic Community of Divine Savior

Family Faith Focus

Volume 9, Issue 42

May 16, 2021

Dates to Remember

- May 15: 4:00 PM Mass
- May 16: 9:00 AM Mass
- Please see our parish website for reservation information and links to view Sunday or weekday Masses online.

Prayer to The Holy Spirit

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love.
Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.
And you shall renew the face of the earth.

O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, instructed the hearts of the faithful, grant that by that same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy his consolations.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Our Easter season draws to a close next Sunday as we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, fifty days after Easter.

This beautiful, very old prayer, the first part of which is based on Psalm 104, calls forth the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts and minds, that we may always be conscious of the presence of the Spirit who gives us wisdom and strength to live our faith each day.

The Ascension of the Lord

Mark 16: 15-20

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

Jesus said to his disciples:
“Go into the whole world
and proclaim the gospel to every creature.
Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved;
whoever does not believe will be condemned.
These signs will accompany those who believe:
in my name they will drive out demons,
they will speak new languages.
They will pick up serpents with their hands,
and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not harm them.
They will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

So then the Lord Jesus, after he spoke to them,
was taken up into heaven
and took his seat at the right hand of God.
But they went forth and preached everywhere,
while the Lord worked with them
and confirmed the word through accompanying signs.

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

Sunday Gospel Connection: May 16, 2021

The Ascension of the Lord, Cycle B

Mark 16: 15-20

Gospel Background: Today is our liturgical celebration of the Ascension of the Lord, when Jesus was taken to heaven on the fortieth day after Easter. In Cycle B, our Gospel is taken from the conclusion of the Gospel of Mark. Scholars have long noted some irregularities about the ending of Mark's Gospel. There is a natural break in the story line at verse 8, when Mark's report of the discovery of the empty tomb comes to an abrupt conclusion. This verse reports that the women were so frightened by what they had seen at the tomb that they told no one. This may be the original ending of Mark's Gospel, but it is also possible that the more complete ending has been lost.

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Some manuscripts of Mark's Gospel, written between the fourth and ninth centuries, include what scholars have termed the Shorter Ending. This is often printed in our Bibles for reference. This ending indicates that the women told their story to Peter's companions. Scholars believe that this ending is not original to Mark. They theorize that this ending was added by copyists who sought to resolve the original abrupt ending at verse 8.

Other early manuscripts include a Longer Ending that scholars also believe was written by someone other than the Evangelist. Nonetheless, quotations from this Longer Ending are found in the writings of the early Church Fathers, and it was accepted at the Council of Trent as part of the canonical Gospel of Mark. Our Gospel for today's celebration of the Feast of the Ascension is taken from this Longer Ending.



There are similarities in the reports of Jesus' Ascension found in the Synoptic Gospels—Mark, Matthew, and Luke. In each case, Jesus assigns his disciples the task of proclaiming the gospel message to the entire world. There are also notable distinctions. In the Gospels of Mark and Matthew, the disciples are sent by Jesus to baptize and to preach. In Luke's Gospel, however, the commission to baptize is absent. Instead, Jesus directs the disciples to return to Jerusalem to await the fulfillment of his promise to send them the Holy Spirit. Curiously, only the Gospels of Mark and Luke actually report Jesus' ascension into heaven. Matthew's Gospel concludes with Jesus' promise to remain with his disciples forever. Only the Gospel of Mark notes that Jesus ascended to sit at the right hand of God. In noting this, Mark teaches that Jesus' ascension affirms the glory Jesus received from God after his death and Resurrection.

Even if this ending to Mark's Gospel was written by someone other than the Evangelist, in the commission that Jesus gives to his disciples, there are elements that are quite typical of Mark's Gospel. The signs that will accompany belief in Jesus are as vivid as the action performed by Jesus during his ministry. Those who believe in Jesus will be empowered to do what Jesus himself has done. During his ministry, Jesus sent his disciples to preach, to heal, and to drive out unclean spirits. Now they are sent again to do these things and more. From his place with God in heaven, Jesus helped his disciples, and he continues to help us as we try to live as his followers.

Family Connection: It can be very important whom we sit next to. Any family that has tried to sit down to a family dinner or packed the car for a trip has heard children argue at least once about who should sit where. To sit next to someone, especially if that person is important, is to have a place of honor. Jesus has this place of honor seated at God's right hand, but there's more to this metaphor than where Jesus sits in relation to God. To be in the place of honor is also to be in a place of power. Knowing people in powerful places can be helpful. Our children remind us of this each time we are called upon to referee a conflict. Jesus, honored at God's right hand, is a powerful ally for us.

As you gather as a family, recall a time when there was a discussion, or perhaps even an argument, about where people were going to sit. Talk about why it might be important to a person to sit in a particular place. Observe that in today's Gospel we will learn about Jesus' place in heaven. Read together today's Gospel, Mark 16:15-20. Talk about what we might learn about the relationship between God and Jesus from today's Gospel and what we learn about Jesus' relationship to us. Observe that one of the things we learn is that Jesus continues to help us from this place of honor in heaven. Pray together the Apostles' Creed.

For more information and Sunday Connection resources visit:

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<https://www.loyolapress.com/catholic-resources/liturgical-year/sunday-connection/ascension-of-the-lord-cycle-b-readings/>

SOLEMNITY OF THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD



Make Us a Gift

Loving Father,
you sent your Son into the world
that we might see you by seeing him.
He offered his life as a gift
for the life of the world.
On the third day, you raised him to life,
a life so powerful it could never again die.
Grant us the grace to offer our lives
as a gift for the life of the world,
so that, dying with Jesus, we might
rise with him.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Sunday, May 16, 2021

We Hope to Follow



Today's readings: Acts 1:1–11; Psalm 47:2–3, 6–7, 8–9; Ephesians 4:1–13; Mark 16:15–20. After the resurrection, Jesus appeared again and again over a forty-day period. He explained the Scriptures to his disciples, they touched him, and they shared meals together. Often it took them time to recognize him.

On the fortieth day, Jesus commissioned the apostles to preach the Gospel to all creatures and to baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Sometimes it seems that these first witnesses were the lucky ones. They saw Jesus, heard his voice and teachings, and perhaps even touched his wounds. Having seen, how could they have done anything but believe? And yet until the Holy Spirit descended at Pentecost, they were afraid. They had seen what had happened to him, and even though he had

risen, they could not have been eager to face persecution themselves. But even though Jesus was gone, he had not abandoned them.

The Ascension is a feast of joy, joy in the Father glorifying Jesus. It is also a feast of anticipation, because we hope that we too will be raised, that we too will be taken up to Jesus because we belong to him. We hope that by believing in Jesus and by living in imitation of him, we too might be citizens of heaven, raised up by the Father.

Our lives become gifts to God when we die to ourselves and unite ourselves to Jesus. May our prayer be one of offering our whole lives to the Father so that dying with the Lord, we might rise with him. Where he has gone, we hope to follow.



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, May 17

Transformed by the Spirit

In the reading from Acts, the men begin to speak in tongues after Paul lays hands on them. Our lives should also look markedly different because the Holy Spirit is within us. Where do you see the Holy Spirit at work in your life? When making big decisions, do you rely on the guidance of the Spirit? How can you invite God to be part of your process of discerning your best way forward? *Today's readings: Acts 19:1–8; Psalm 68:2–3ab, 4–5acd, 6–7ab; John 16:29–33.*

Tuesday, May 18

Bearing Witness

As Paul looks at the possibility of his future martyrdom, his words echo the words of Jesus before the passion. Both focused on the people they served, the people who were their mission. Jesus, sent by God, and Paul, sent by the risen Christ, both call all people into the light so that the plan of God might be fulfilled. God is always sending us too. How are you called to “bear witness to the gospel of God’s grace”? *Today's readings: Acts 20:17–27; Psalm 68:10–11, 20–21; John 17:1–11a.*

Wednesday, May 19

Spring and New Life

As spring progresses in the northern hemisphere, the natural world abounds with beauty. Take some time to walk in nature and experience the beauty of God’s creation. Is this a time when it is easy for you to experience God’s presence? How can you take more time for listening in this way? Care of creation is one of our duties as human beings, to whom God entrusted the natural world. Is there something simple you can do to care for God’s creation today? *Today's readings: Acts 20:28–38; Psalm 68:29–30, 33–35a, 35bc–36ab; John 17:11b–19.*

Thursday, May 20

Peacemakers

The reading from Acts portrays an event in which religious people react to Paul’s actions out of their conviction. So stirred up are the factions that they have a difficult time responding peacefully. Sometimes people who love the Church can be like this. Strong emotions arise when people become defensive, when it seems like their ways of being in relationship with God are challenged. Yet we are called to be peacemakers, even as we are called to speak the truth and give prophetic witness. Christ’s peace is received in the Eucharist. How can you live out this call to make peace within the Church? *Today's readings: Acts 22:30, 23:6–11; Psalm 16:1–2a and 5, 7–8, 9–10, 11; John 17:20–26.*

Friday, May 21

Our Lives as a Gift

The number of times Peter declares his love for Jesus corresponds to his three denials of the Lord before the crucifixion. With these affirmations, Jesus tells Peter to “feed my sheep.” No matter what we have done in the past, God is waiting to redeem it. Everyone’s life can be offered as a gift to God, the giver of life. *Today's readings: Acts 25:13b–21; Psalm 103:1–2, 11–12, 19–20ab; John 21:15–19.*

Saturday, May 22

Preparing for Pentecost

Consider planning a celebration for Pentecost. Gather party supplies in red, the liturgical color of the day. The celebration could be a birthday party, since Pentecost is often considered the birth of the Church. Decorate with doves or tongues of fire. Prayer cards could highlight the gifts of the Holy Spirit: wisdom, knowledge, understanding, counsel, fear of the Lord, piety, and fortitude. *Today's readings: Acts 28:16–20, 30–31; Psalm 11:4, 5 and 7; John 21:20–25.*

