

The Word of God This Week

Set time aside each day this week with other members of your household, with other members of your parish or alone to listen to and reflect on the living Word of God. Use these passages from the Lectionary that are assigned for Liturgy this week. Reflect on how the Lord is inviting you to a deeper union with him.

TODAY*

Acts 1:1–11
Ephesians 4:1–13
Mark 16:15–20

MONDAY

John 16: 29-33
"Do you now believe?"

TUESDAY

John 17: 1-11a
"Father, the hour has come."

WEDNESDAY

John 17: 11b-19
"...now I am coming to you..."

THURSDAY

John 17: 20-26
"...that they may become completely one..."

FRIDAY

John 21: 15-19
"Feed my lambs...Tend my sheep."

SATURDAY

John 21: 20-25
"Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?"

*The Ascension of the Lord
Alternate readings exist for this day.

His Ascension and Our Responsibility

The Gospel of Saint Mark says, "Jesus was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God." However, before he departed he gave the Apostles a mandate: "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation."

The message is clear. With his physical absence on Earth, his followers are to take up his mission and continue it, until he returns again in glory.

The same message is echoed in the first reading from Acts. The two men (or angels) in white robes address the disciples and question them: "... why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same

way as you saw him go into heaven." They are basically saying, "There is work to be done. Don't just stand around."

The spiritual mission of the risen Lord, who is seated at the right hand of God the Father, continues; in fact, it intensifies. From the Father, Jesus will send the Holy Spirit upon his followers, and they will receive power from on high.

And with the power of the Spirit, the Good News is proclaimed. Baptism is celebrated. The poor are cared for. And that sacramental way of carrying out the mission of Jesus continues in the community of his followers, in his Church.

The Feast of the Ascension recognizes this in-between time here on Earth. It celebrates Christ and his Ascension in glory at the same time that it identifies us as being responsible for continuing his mission here on Earth.



The Faith of the Church

The Church has a continuing responsibility to bring Jesus Christ to the world. This is a perennial mandate that is perennially valid. To be true to ourselves and to what the Lord wants of us, we must continue this mission (Cf. the Encyclical letter of Blessed Pope John Paul II Redemptoris mission 1990).



Questions of the Week

We belong to and in the Catholic Church. Approximately one billion believers make up the Church, but we must, as individuals, claim our particular responsibility in the Church and for the world so that we can make a real difference.

Adults

In the particular circumstances of my life, how can I see myself continuing the mission of Jesus in the world?

Children

How have I told others about Jesus and helped them the way that Jesus would have?

Responding to God's Word . . .

From the Ascension of the Lord in Acts and at the end of the Gospel of Mark, we can infer that the Ascension of Jesus points to our responsibility to continue his mission on Earth, until he comes again in glory.

The reading from the Letter to the Ephesians gives us a fuller picture of what that might look like. "When he ascended on high ... he gave gifts to his people." This text tells us that Christ not only entrusted his followers with the responsibility to continue his mission, but he also gave them the means to do so. He "gave gifts" to his people to equip us. A sampling

of those gifts includes apostleship, prophecy, evangelization, pastoring, and teaching.

If we are to respond to God's Word and, more precisely, respond to living in this time, after the Ascension, then a good place to start is to identify the gifts that God has given us to carry on his mission. They need not be spectacular or dramatic gifts. What matters most is that they belong to us, and that we use them for building up the Body of Christ.



Meditation Moment

A high point in a relay race is the moment when one runner passes the baton to another runner. More races are won or lost at that moment than at any other moment in the race. The ascension of Jesus might be compared to the passing of the baton. Jesus passes the baton of God's Kingdom to his disciples to complete the work that he began on earth.

For reflection . . .

How is the work I am doing right now related to the completion of God's Kingdom on earth? How might I relate it more closely?

NOW I GET ME UP TO WORK, I PRAY THE LORD I MAY NOT SHIRK, AND IF I DIE BEFORE TONIGHT, I PRAY MY WORK WILL BE ALL RIGHT.

THOMAS OSBORNE DAVIS

ADAPTED FROM *MISSION* BY MARK LINK, SJ

Let Me Be Your Voice and Your Hands

Lord Jesus Christ, ascended into glory and seated at the right hand of the Father, give me the grace and the gifts necessary to be your voice and to be your hands in the world. May I make your healing, your forgiveness, and your loving sacrifice present to all whom I will meet today, so that together we may one day arrive to share your glory in the heavenly Kingdom where you live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

Carry this thought in your heart as a guide for your faith journey this week.

"What shall I return to the Lord for all his bounty to me? I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people."

Psalm 116:1--14

SUGGESTIONS

Use one of these suggestions or one of your own to respond to God's Word this week.

In the home. Invite family members to identify a unique gift that each has that can be used in service to the body of Christ.

In the workplace or in school. Having identified within yourself a gift God has given you to continue Jesus' mission, resolve to use that gift in a specific way in the coming week.

In the community. Encourage one or more people to use their gifts in service to the community. Do this deliberately and concretely.

Profile in Faith

Saint Homobonus 1197

Saint Homobonus (the name means "good man") was a merchant of Cremona, Italy. He married, he worked, and he cared with all his heart for the poor. Saint Homobonus was known for doing ordinary things in an extraordinary way. He died in 1197. His feast day is November 13.

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