

24 MAY 2020
THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD

OPENING HYMN

Celebrate God with your hands.

Celebrate God with your voice.
Celebrate God in all that you do
And He will be with you.

Celebrate God with us.
Celebrate God with us.
Emmanuel, Emmanuel.
Celebrate God with us.

(or choose an appropriate alternate hymn)

OPENING PRAYER

Almighty God, we pray that we, who believe that your only begotten Son, our Redeemer, ascended this day to the heavens, may in spirit dwell already in heavenly realms. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

FIRST READING: Acts 1:1-11

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Psalm 46:2-3, 6-9

Response: 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: Ephesians 1:17-23

GOSPEL: Matthew 28:16-20

REFLECTION:

Many of us live with a mistaken belief that the ascension pertains only to Jesus. In the Roman Missal, the Preface I of the Ascension tells us “*Jesus ascended into heaven not to distance himself from our lowly state, but that we his members, might be confident of following where he, our head and founder has gone before*”.

Jesus tells his disciples to go to Galilee where he had inaugurated his saving mission. The disciples begin to do what Jesus did. This time the mission is not bound by geographical limits but to “*all nations*” and “*till the end of the age*”. Jesus commissions not only his first disciples but all those who follow him as his disciples. Are we ready to take up the mission of Jesus?

The first reading tells us about imploring God to send his Spirit and witnessing that will be the essence of the Church. In today’s enthronement Psalm, the Israelites celebrated God’s ascendancy over all heaven and earth. Today we use this psalm to proclaim that Christ has been given “*all power in heaven and earth*”. He is able to be present with his disciples everywhere and in every age. We celebrate Christ’s reign, even though we do not know the time when the kingdom will be fully manifest. We look forward to that day even as the second reading reminds us of the “*hope that we are called to in Christ*”. How can our lives be one of sacrifice and service for others? By our witness can others be drawn to Christ?

PRAAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Leader: Jesus assures us, “*I am with you always, until the end of the age*’. Let us confidently bring our prayers before the Lord.

Our response is: Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for all the members of the Church, that we may carry out Jesus’ commission to proclaim the gospel to the ends of the earth; *(pause)*; let us pray to the Lord...

We pray for all those in authority that they may make decisions for the common good and welfare of all their citizens; *(pause)*; let us pray to the Lord...

We pray for all those who are suffering because of the pandemic of Corona virus. May they find food, shelter and safety; *(pause)*; let us pray to the Lord...

We pray for all baptised Christians that we may be witnesses of Christ’s presence; *(pause)*; let us pray to the Lord...

Leader: Heavenly Father, your Son Jesus, ascended into heaven to sit at your right hand. Hear the prayers that we offer you and help all of us to know your love. We ask this through Christ our Lord, Amen.

Let us together at the Saviour’s command and formed by Divine teaching, dare to say:
(All say the Lord’s Prayer together) Our Father, ...

CLOSING PRAYER

Almighty ever-living God, who allow those on earth to celebrate divine mysteries, we pray, that Christian hope may draw us onward to where our nature is united with you. Through Christ our Lord. Amen

PRAYER FOR RELIEF FROM THE CORONAVIRUS

Almighty and merciful God, who show Your love to all creation everywhere, hear graciously the prayers we make for all those affected by the Coronavirus in various parts of the world.

We come before You asking for a quick control of the outbreak, for a healing of those affected, for the victims and their families.

We pray for the doctors doing research that an effective vaccine to combat the sickness is speedily found.

We pray for the Government and health authorities that they take appropriate steps for the good of the people. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN

Go, go into the World tell them I'm alive

Go into the streets, tell them that I live,

Oh! that I live in you.

Go, go into the world, claim it for your King,

Go into the streets, dry your people's tears,

Oh! making all things new.

(or choose an appropriate alternate hymn)