



May 16, 2021

Ascension of the Lord (B)

Acts 1:1-11

Eph 1:17-23 or Eph 4:1-13 or 4:1-7, 11-13

Mk 16:15-20

Up in Heaven

The message of this feast is that Jesus was taken up into heaven. Just what does this mean? Is heaven “up there” along with the moon and the stars? Cosmology would question that. Today’s readings also say that Jesus is seated at God’s right hand. Is this science, or is it a concrete image used to explain something more marvelous than words can describe?

Traditionally the place of honor is at the dignitary’s right hand (decided by a right-hander, no doubt). That Jesus sits at God’s right hand means he enjoys the place of highest honor. The psalm response refers to this exalted place as the throne of God. “Throne” suggests king. Thus, the readings tell us that Jesus, who is now exalted with divine honor, is above everything else. Finally, to say that heaven is above means that it is beyond earth, perhaps not in actual distance but in distinction and glory. Thus, Jesus’ ascension means that the risen Lord is no longer limited by the

restrictions of earth’s space and time but now enjoys the highest honor with God everywhere and always.

This is the message the disciples were sent to preach. This is the message we also are sent to preach. But how are we to do it? By the way we live our lives. Emmanuel Célestin Cardinal Suhard of Paris (1874–1949) wrote: “To be a witness...means to live in such a way that one’s life would not make sense if God did not exist.” Do our lives show that we believe this?

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

FOR Reflection

- ★ Thank God for people in your life who mirror God’s generosity, forgiveness, and kindness to you.
- ★ Think about ways you might mirror God’s goodness to others.



[Jesus] said to them,
 “Go into the whole world and
 proclaim the gospel to every creature.”
 MARK 16:15

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Dear Padre,

My neighbor, a fundamentalist Christian, said I won't be saved unless I accept Jesus as my personal savior. Didn't Jesus become my savior when I was baptized?

Your neighbor is probably referring to John 3:7, when Jesus said, "You must be born anew" (*Common English Bible*). Jesus is talking about a spiritual rebirth; we must have a spiritual birth in order to be saved. As you noted, Catholics believe this happens at baptism. In John 3:5, Jesus says, "Unless someone is born of water and the Spirit, it's not possible to enter God's kingdom."



PHOTOGRAPH BY SHUTTERSTOCK

We are saved by the waters of baptism. But for Catholics, it's not merely a one-time event. We continue to accept or reject the salvation offered us by the decisions we make every day.

Your neighbor used the words "personal savior." Catholic Christians go even deeper through the sacraments. We develop and nurture a very personal relationship with Jesus by regularly receiving the Eucharist. In the sacrament of reconciliation, we admit we have sinned and ask Jesus to forgive us. And in the sacrament of confirmation, our relationship is "sealed" with the gift of the Spirit.

Many Catholics also celebrate the sacrament of marriage. The couple's personal relationship with Jesus is deepened through the love the couple shares.

So, tell your neighbor you are indeed saved by Jesus. And because you are saved, you deepen that relationship with Jesus by living a sacramental life.

Fr. Patrick Keyes, CSSR
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A WORD FROM *Pope Francis*

The Ascension tells us that Jesus, although he ascended to heaven to dwell gloriously at the right hand of the Father, is still and is always among us: this is the source of our strength, our perseverance, and our joy, from the presence of Jesus among us with the strength of the Holy Spirit.

ASCENSION SUNDAY, MAY 24, 2020

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Calendar

Monday

MAY 17

Easter Weekday

Acts 19:1-8

Jn 16:29-33

Tuesday

MAY 18

Easter Weekday

Acts 20:17-27

Jn 17:1-11a

Wednesday

MAY 19

Easter Weekday

Acts 20:28-38

Jn 17:11b-19

Thursday

MAY 20

Easter Weekday

Acts 22:30; 23:6-11

Jn 17:20-26

Friday

MAY 21

Easter Weekday

Acts 25:13b-21

Jn 21:15-19

Saturday

MAY 22

Easter Weekday

Acts 28:16-20, 30-31

Jn 21:20-25

Sunday

MAY 23

Pentecost Sunday

Acts 2:1-11

1 Cor 12:3b-7, 12-13

or Gal 5:16-25

Jn 20:19-23

or Jn 15:26-27;

16:12-15

Know Someone Overly Anxious About Sin?
Since 1964, the Redemptorists' *Scrupulous Anonymous* free monthly newsletter has ministered compassionately to those struggling with scrupulosity. To subscribe, visit ScrupulousAnonymous.org.

