



Sunday After Ascension Day **24th May 2020**

Dear Friends in the Gospel!

Today is the Sunday after Ascension so we will stay with the liturgy for the Ascension of our Lord. We have a beautiful week with the weather – but, I know that for some of you the week has also brought sadness. The bible readings this week are encouraging, telling us that we will be washed clean and be given a new spirit – assuring, saying that only God has the authority to set dates and times – and, comforting, as Jesus prays his apostles and for all of us.

Things continue to grow profusely in the garden, creating the need to prune some things back – another analogy for us at this present time!

And, this week, thanks to Sally, we are thinking about giving something to those in most basic need – the need for food. Look out for the other attachment to the email.

I pray the God of compassion will bless you this week – Carol x

Take a moment's silence to prepare for worship – maybe to light a candle.....

Greeting

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, forty days we have been celebrating with joyful hearts the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and his defeat of the power of sin and death. After his resurrection he appeared to his disciples many times and told them about the Kingdom of God.

Let us recall again how he left this earth and returned to his Father, ascending into heaven to take his place of authority over all dominions and powers. Trusting in his reign over all creation, and submitting to his kingly yet loving rule, let us enter again into the truth of his glorious ascension.

Prayer of Preparation

Loving God, we set aside this time to worship you.
Help us to pray to you in faith,
to sing your praise with gratitude,
and to read and absorb your word with eagerness;
and to give our lives to your will on earth.
Amen.

Confession

Jesus is our High Priest, tempted like us,
yet without sin.
He ascended into heaven
and lives there for ever to intercede for us.
Through him we can approach the throne of grace with confidence.

Therefore, let us draw near with a true heart and in full assurance of faith and confess our sins to our heavenly Father.

In a moments silence we let God remind us of anything we need to confess.

O King enthroned on high, filling the earth with your glory:
Holy is your name.
In our sinfulness we cry to you to take our guilt away,
and to cleanse our lips to speak your word,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Absolution

Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon us,
pardon and deliver us from all our sins,
confirm and strengthen us in all goodness,
and keep us in life eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Collect for Ascension Sunday

Risen, ascended Lord, as we rejoice in your triumph,
fill your Church on earth with power and compassion;
that all who are estranged by sin,
may find forgiveness and know your peace,
to the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

Bible Readings:

Ezekiel 36:24-28, Acts 1:6-14, John 17:1-11

Reflection:

I have a lovely book called 'God in the Garden' by Philip Eley and at the moment, during May, he is looking at taking cuttings. He says how taking cuttings can seem 'magical' and that 'It doesn't seem to make sense. How can slicing off a part of a plant result in a new plant? It's like slicing off a finger and watching it grow into a person.' Philip goes into more detail about knowing what type of plant it is, and where to cut from, and then about church planting and growing new churches. We are at a pivotal moment in history where we can grow new shoots – new ways of being church, and new shoots of faith in our own lives and in the lives of others.

An important part of our own spiritual growth is to share the Good News of Jesus with others. We are not here simply building our own little kingdoms, our destiny in Christ is much bigger: our destiny is to play our specific part in building the Kingdom of God. This, of course, is our 'Great Commission' – as stated in Matthew 28.

Of course we are not 'lone working' on this – Jesus promised us the Holy Spirit, which he duly gave; and he also intercedes for us. Just as he prayed for his apostles before his ascension – a prayer prayed for us all, Jesus also continues to pray to the Father on our behalf. (Hebrews 8) *Jesus is praying for you – bringing YOU before God the Father!*

It's so satisfying to see a cutting taking root, becoming established and flourishing as a plant in its own rite. How much more satisfying to see the life of a person transformed with the knowledge, love and life of Jesus Christ. It's amazing that we can give something of ourselves to grow a new Christian life!

Remember God is faithful and consistent – at the burial tomb after the crucifixion, the angel said: "Why are you looking for him here – he is risen!" And, now as Jesus ascends the angel

is there saying: “Why are you standing here looking into heaven? Jesus has been taken into heaven, but he will return in the same way you saw him go!”

This made me smile because sometimes we are just standing there ‘gawping’ – if the disciples/we were listening we would say: “Yep, that was meant to happen, and we know what we need to do now....” And, we’d get going.

The Extending of Peace

Jesus says: “If you love me rejoice because I am going to the Father.”
“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.”

The peace of the Lord be *always* with us...
and also with all people across the world.

Pause for a moment to extend the peace of the Ascended Christ to the world....

Intercession for Ascension

Rejoicing in the glorious Ascension, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, make your Church a messenger of the Gospel that has been revealed, and a witness of the highly exalted Christ to all nations. Keep all Christian people open to receiving the power of your Holy Spirit, the giver of life.

Lord, in your mercy – hear our prayer.

God of all, may all peoples know the ascended Christ in their midst –we bring before you the needs across the world in this current pandemic situation.

As the humanity of Christ is taken up into heaven, may your perfect image be restored in all humankind.

Lord, in your mercy – hear our prayer.

As we look up to heaven in adoration, let us turn our eyes also towards the needs that lie around us... *and pray as the Spirit leads.*

Lord, in your mercy – hear our prayer.

Compassionate God, have mercy on those caught up in a cloud of sorrow, pain and grief. Receive those who have died into your loving arms and heal those who still ail in mind, body or spirit.

Lord, in your mercy – hear our prayer.

God of all grace, mercy and compassion, may our prayers be accepted through Jesus Christ – risen, ascended and glorified.

Amen.

The Lord’s Prayer

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and forever.
Amen.

Blessing

The Father, whose glory fills the heavens,
send you out to proclaim his word.

The Son, who has ascended to the heights,
pour upon you the riches of his grace.

The Holy Spirit, the Comforter,
equip you and strengthen you in your ministry.

And the blessing of the Holy Trinity,
be with us all and those we love,
now and forever.

Amen.



1,000 Reasons – Matt Redman

We have a thousand reasons to praise our risen and ascended Lord!

[Listen to the song here:](#)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DXDGE_IRI0E

