

May 24

The Ascension of the Lord or Seventh Sunday of Easter

If your diocese celebrates the Ascension of the Lord on Thursday, May 21, then this Sunday is the Seventh Sunday of Easter. The readings for the Seventh Sunday of Easter can be found on page 179.



First Reading (Acts 1:1-11)

In the first book, **Theophilus**, I dealt with all that Jesus did and taught until the day he was taken up, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. He presented himself alive to them by many proofs after he had suffered, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. While meeting with them, he enjoined them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for “the promise of the Father about which you have heard me speak; for John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

When they had gathered together they asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the **kingdom** to Israel?” He answered them, “It is not for you to know the times or seasons that the Father has established by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” When he had said this, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him from their sight. While they were looking intently at the sky as he was going, suddenly two men dressed in white garments stood beside them. They said, “Men of **Galilee**, why are you standing there looking at the sky? This Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven will return in the same way you have seen him going into heaven.”

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Responsorial Psalm (Psalm 47:2-3, 6-7, 8-9)

R. God mounts his throne to shouts of joy: a blare of trumpets for the Lord. Or Alleluia.

All you peoples, clap your hands,
shout to God with cries of gladness,
for the LORD, the Most High, the awesome,
is the great king over all the earth. **R.**

God mounts his throne amid shouts of joy;
the LORD, amid trumpet blasts.
Sing praise to God, sing praise;
sing praise to our king, sing praise. **R.**

For king of all the earth is God;
sing hymns of praise.
God reigns over the nations,
God sits upon his holy throne. R.

Second Reading (Ephesians 1:17-23)

Brothers and sisters: May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give you a Spirit of wisdom and revelation resulting in knowledge of him. May the eyes of your hearts be enlightened, that you may know what is the hope that belongs to his call, what are the riches of glory in his inheritance among the holy ones, and what is the surpassing greatness of his power for us who believe, in accord with the exercise of his great might, which he worked in Christ, raising him from the dead and seating him at his **right hand** in the heavens, far above every **principality, authority, power, and dominion**, and every name that is named not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things beneath his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of the one who fills all things in every way.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel (Matthew 28:16-20)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.
Glory to you, O Lord.

The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them. When they saw him, they worshiped, but they doubted. Then Jesus approached and said to them, "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, **I am with you always**, until the end of the age."

7th Sunday of Easter

First Reading (Acts 1:12-14)

After Jesus had been taken up to heaven the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey away.

When they entered the city they went to the upper room where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. All these devoted themselves with one accord to prayer, together with some women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Responsorial Psalm (Psalm 27:1, 4, 7-8)

R. I believe that I shall see the good things of the Lord
in the land of the living. *Or Alleluia.*

The LORD is my light and my salvation;
whom should I fear?

The LORD is my life's refuge;
of whom should I be afraid? *R.*

One thing I ask of the LORD;
this I seek:

To dwell in the house of the LORD
all the days of my life,
that I may gaze on the loveliness of the LORD
and contemplate his temple. *R.*

Hear, O LORD, the sound of my call;
have pity on me, and answer me.

Of you my heart speaks; you my glance seeks. *R.*

Second Reading (1 Peter 4:13-16)

Beloved: Rejoice to the extent that you share in the sufferings of Christ, so that when his glory is revealed you may also rejoice exultantly. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. But let no one among you be made to suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as an intriguer. But whoever is made to suffer as a Christian should not be ashamed but glorify God because of the name.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel (John 17:1-11a)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come. Give glory to your son, so that your son may glorify you, just as you gave him authority over all people, so that your son may give eternal life to all you gave him. Now this is eternal life, that they should know you, the only true God, and the one whom you sent, Jesus Christ. I glorified you on earth by accomplishing the work that you gave me to do. Now glorify me, Father, with you, with the glory that I had with you before the world began.

"I revealed your name to those whom you gave me out of the world. They belonged to you, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you gave me is from you, because the words you gave to me I have given to them, and they accepted them and truly understood that I came from you, and they have believed that you sent me. I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for the ones you have given me, because they are yours, and everything of mine is yours and everything of yours is mine, and I have been glorified in them. And now I will no longer be in the world, but they are in the world, while I am coming to you."

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

Key Words

On the feast of the **Ascension**, we remember the moment when Jesus returned to the house of his Father, forty days after rising from the dead. Jesus no longer appeared to his disciples, but he sent the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

Theophilus (a Greek name that means “friend of God”) lived in Antioch. He was a leader of the Christian communities of Greece. Saint Luke sent his gospel as well as the Acts of the Apostles to him.

In the days of Jesus, Israel was part of the Roman Empire and was not free to govern itself. Some of the disciples hoped that Jesus would free Israel from Rome’s bitter rule and bring back the ancient **kingdom** of Israel.

Galilee is a province in the north of Israel. Nazareth, the town where Jesus lived with his parents, is in Galilee. So is the Sea of Tiberias, where some of Jesus’ disciples worked as fishermen. In

Jerusalem, to the south, Jesus and his followers were recognized as Galileans because of their accent.

When Saint Paul says that Jesus sits at the **right hand** of God, he is saying that Jesus is as close as possible to God the Father. There is no place closer to God.

When Saint Paul speaks of every **principality, authority, power, and dominion**, he is not talking about earthly governments. Instead, he means different kinds of angels in heaven. Jesus sits so close to the Father in heaven that he is above all the angels.

“**I am with you always**” is the promise Jesus made to the disciples and to us. He is with us when we gather in his name as a community, when we listen to God’s word, when we celebrate the Eucharist, and when we share his love with others.

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