

The Living Word

The Ascension of the Lord, Year C

1 June 2025

First Reading Acts 1:1-11

Why are you standing here looking into the sky? Jesus has been taken into heaven.

In my earlier work, Theophilus, I dealt with everything Jesus had done and taught from the beginning until the day he gave his instructions to the apostles he had chosen through the Holy Spirit, and was taken up to heaven. He had shown himself alive to them after his Passion by many demonstrations: for forty days he had continued to appear to them and tell them about the kingdom of God. When he had been at table with them, he had told them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for what the Father had promised. 'It is,' he had said, 'what you have heard me speak about: John baptised with water but you, not many days from now, will be baptised with the Holy Spirit.'

Now having met together, they asked him, 'Lord, has the time come? Are you going to restore the kingdom to Israel?' He replied, 'It is not for you to know times or dates that the Father has decided by his own authority, but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and then you will be my witnesses not only in Jerusalem but throughout Judaea and Samaria, and indeed to the ends of the earth.'

As he said this he was lifted up while they looked on, and a cloud took him from their sight. They were still staring into the sky when suddenly two men in white were standing near them and they said, 'Why are you men from Galilee standing here looking into the sky? Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven, this same Jesus will come back in the same way as you have seen him go there.'

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 46:2-3. 6-7. 8-9. R. v.6

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

or:

(R.) Alleluia.

1. 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.)
2. 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.)
3. 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 Eph 1:17-23

He made Jesus to sit at his right hand in heaven.

May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give you a spirit of wisdom and perception of what is revealed, to bring you to full knowledge of him. May he enlighten the eyes of your mind so that you can see what hope his call holds for you, what rich glories he has promised the saints will inherit and how infinitely great is the power that he has exercised for us believers. This you can tell

from the strength of his power at work in Christ, when he used it to raise him from the dead and to make him sit at his right hand, in heaven, far above every Sovereignty, Authority, Power, or Domination, or any other name that can be named, not only in this age, but also in the age to come. He has put all things under his feet, and made him, as the ruler of everything, the head of the Church; which is his body, the fullness of him who fills the whole creation.

or Heb 9:24-28. 10:19-23

Christ has entered heaven.

It is not as though Christ had entered a man-made sanctuary which was only modelled on the real one; but it was heaven itself, so that he could appear in the actual presence of God on our behalf. And he does not have to offer himself again and again, like the high priest going into the sanctuary year after year with the blood that is not his own, or else he would have had to suffer over and over again since the world began. Instead of that, he has made his appearance once and for all, now at the end of the last age, to do away with sin by sacrificing himself. Since men only die once, and after that comes judgement, so Christ, too, offers himself only once to take the faults of many on himself, and when he appears a second time, it will not be to deal with sin but to reward with salvation those who are waiting for him.

In other words, brothers, through the blood of Jesus we have the right to enter the sanctuary, by a new way which he has opened for us, a living opening through the curtain, that is to say, his body. And we have the supreme high priest over all the house of God. So as we go in, let us be sincere in heart and filled with faith, our minds sprinkled and free from any trace of bad conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us keep firm in the hope we profess, because the one who made the promise is faithful.

Gospel Acclamation Mt 28:19. 20

Alleluia, alleluia!

Go and teach all people my gospel.

I am with you always, until the end of the world.

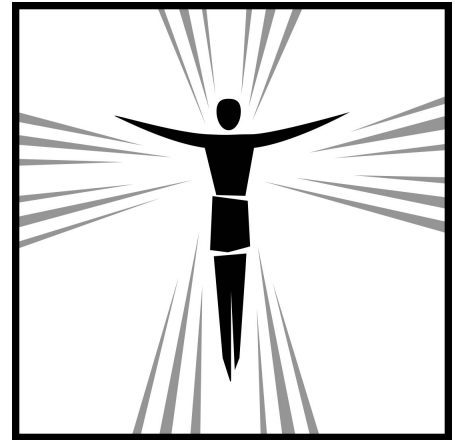
Alleluia!

Gospel Lk 24:46-53

While blessing them, he was taken to heaven.

Jesus said to his disciples: 'You see how it is written that the Christ would suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that, in his name, repentance for the forgiveness of sins would be preached to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses to this.

'And now I am sending down to you what the Father has promised. Stay in the city then, until you are clothed with the power from on high.' Then he took them out as far as the outskirts of Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. Now as he blessed them, he withdrew from them and was carried up to heaven. They worshipped him and then went back to Jerusalem full of joy; and they were continually in the Temple praising God.



Reflection by Fr Michael Tate

Our Risen Lord knew that we are naturally, collectively human-centric. He withdrew His risen mode of appearance (what we call 'the Ascension') to make it clear that the whole Universe, including planet Earth, is filled with the presence and power radiating out from his Risen Humanity.

As St Paul wrote in the Epistle to the Romans: 'Creation still retains the hope of being freed from its slavery to decay, to enjoy the same freedom and glory as the children of God.' How is the Risen Lord beginning to fulfil this hope?

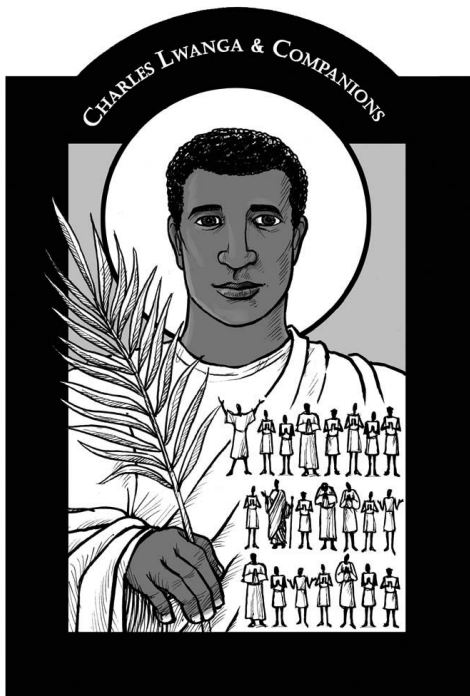
At Mass, fractions of creation – the Bread and Wine consecrated for Holy Communion – are transformed into the Real Presence of the Risen Lord.

Eucharistic Prayer III begins with: 'You are indeed Holy, O Lord, and all you have created rightly gives you praise...' How can all creation give God praise? As the ancient church used to teach: Each of you is a microcosm of the macrocosm, called to be a priest for the Cosmos. Through your enlightened mind and inflamed heart, the Cosmos knows that it exists and that it is loved by its Creator. It is beginning to share the freedom and glory of the children of God.

We could pause for a moment, stop staring into Heaven, and ready ourselves to receive the Holy Spirit so as to be what St Paul calls 'the Church which is His Body in whom the fullness of creation dwells'.

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Charles Lwanga and his companions were African Catholics who died for their faith in Uganda in the 1880s. At the time Uganda was ruled by King Mwanga who persecuted Christians for their primary allegiance to God rather than their king. Charles Lwanga was the head of the royal page boys, some of whom he had baptised. One day all the pages were assembled and the Christians were separated from the group and arrested. Charles and his companions, many only boys, were martyred for their belief. The example of these passionate young Africans inspired many people who then became converts to Christianity.



How many words can you make from the letters in the word ASCENSION?

Wordsearch

Try to find these words:



Bethany
blessed
disciples
hands
happy
Jerusalem
Jesus
praising
raised
temple
time
worshipped

F	C	E	M	Z	Y	E	F	R	A	I	S	E	D	X
Q	K	R	B	A	O	U	R	V	C	M	C	N	K	Y
A	F	B	E	T	H	A	N	Y	H	A	P	P	Y	J
D	Z	Q	I	M	V	B	F	Q	T	H	V	R	B	V
U	Z	H	S	D	I	S	C	I	P	L	E	S	L	D
L	P	C	J	X	P	Y	T	S	M	R	N	P	Z	Z
A	B	E	C	F	A	L	T	Z	W	S	F	K	R	C
M	P	U	W	O	R	S	H	I	P	P	E	D	X	J
B	L	Z	R	V	B	L	E	S	S	E	D	D	T	I
C	K	F	A	C	P	R	A	I	S	I	N	G	E	J
G	T	J	E	R	U	S	A	L	E	M	T	C	M	E
W	G	U	H	A	N	D	S	U	G	S	M	O	P	S
L	L	M	R	M	A	U	S	R	Z	P	D	O	L	U
Y	J	T	I	M	E	S	K	S	I	E	N	E	E	S