

# Solemnity of the Ascension

## FutureChurch Online Liturgy of the Word

### Introductory Rites

#### Sign of the Cross

Leader:

In the name of God, who loves us into being,  
Of the Eternal Word, whose life speaks us into freedom,  
and the Spirit, who moves us into holiness,  
*(making the sign of the cross)*

**ALL: AMEN**

#### Greeting

Leader:

The healing peace of Jesus,  
the abundant Love of God,  
and the constant companionship of the Holy Spirit  
IS with you,

**ALL: And also with you.**

#### Introductory Remarks

*Prepared by the Leader.*

#### Opening Prayer

Leader:

Let us pray.

Ever-present and loving God,  
We cast our cares on you because you care for us.

Enfold us with your presence, and fill us once more with holy awe,  
That by the mystery of the Ascension,  
We may be sustained in hope.

Empower us by the constant outpouring of your Holy Spirit,  
That we – the Body of Christ - may live and work together  
bearing witness to all you desire for us and for creation.

We make this prayer in the name of Jesus,  
Who lives and thrives with you, with us all,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever.

**ALL: AMEN**

## LITURGY OF THE WORD

*\*\*\*Texts have been adapted for inclusive/expansive language\*\*\**

### **First Reading**

Lector: A reading from the Acts of the Apostles,

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 reign of God.

On one occasion,  
he told them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for  
“the promise of God 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, the disciples asked Jesus  
“Rabbi, are you at this time going to restore the sovereignty of Israel?”

Jesus replied, “It is not for you to know the times or seasons  
that God has decided.  
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.”

Having said this, Jesus was lifted up in a cloud before their eyes and taken  
from their sight.

They were still gazing up to the heavens,  
when two messengers dressed in white stood beside them.

They said, “You Galileans,  
why are you standing there looking up at the sky?  
This Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven  
will return in the same way as you have seen him going into heaven.”

**All:** The Word of God  
**Thanks be to God**

## Psalm

Psalmist: The response is:  
"Alleluia, Alleluia!"  
**R "Alleluia, Alleluia!"**

People everywhere – clap your hands!  
Should to god with a joyful voice,  
For God Most Holy is awe-inspiring,  
That great Ruler of all the earth"  
**"Alleluia, Alleluia!"**

God ascends the throne with a shout,  
With trumpet blasts!  
Sing praise to God, sing praise!  
Sing praise to our Ruler, sing praise!  
**"Alleluia, Alleluia!"**

For God rules over all the earth!  
Sing praise.  
God reigns over the nations;  
God sits upon a throne of holiness!  
**"Alleluia, Alleluia!"**

## Second Reading

Lector: A reading from the Letter of Paul to the Ephesians,

Sisters and Brothers:  
May the God of our Savior Jesus Christ, the God of glory,  
give you a Spirit of wisdom and revelation,  
to bring you to a rich knowledge of the Creator.

May the eyes of your heart be enlightened,  
That you may see the hope this call holds for you –  
the promised glories that God's holy ones will inherit,  
and the infinitely great power that is exercised for us who believe.

You can tell this from the strength of God's power at work in Jesus,  
the power used to raise Christ from the dead  
and to seat Christ in heaven at God's right hand,  
far above every sovereignty, authority, power or dominion,  
and above any other name that can be named –  
not only in this age, but also in the age to come.

And God has put all things under Christ's feet  
And gave Christ as head over all things to the church,  
which is the body of Christ,  
the fullness of the One who fills all things in every way.

The word of God  
**ALL: Thanks be to God**

### **Gospel Acclamation**

Leader/Russ: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

**ALL: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

Leader/Russ: Go and teach all nations, I am with you always, until the end of the world.

**ALL: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

### **Gospel**

A reading from the Gospel according to Matthew:

The eleven disciples went to Galilee,  
to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them.  
When they saw Jesus, 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 Abba God,  
and of the Only Begotten, 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."

The Good News of Our Salvation  
**ALL: Praise to you, O Christ.**

## FAITH SHARING

### Reflection

– CWP Video: [www.catholicwomenpreach.org/preaching/05242020](http://www.catholicwomenpreach.org/preaching/05242020)

### Questions for Shared Reflection:

*Our readings – with their language and imagery of power, majesty, and might – evoke the Reign of God: a reign revealed by Jesus to be one of justice and equality, peace and wholeness. **What “powers” in your own life, in our Church, in our world are opposed to the Reign of God? How can we make the Reign of God more of a concrete reality in our own time and place?***

*Concluding her preaching, Cathe Shoulberg tells us that through the Ascension we are called and sent “to stand, serve and be with the poor among us; to welcome the marginalized, to help the sick, to forgive one another...to LOVE as Jesus.” **So much of Jesus’ ministry was physical, intimate, close...Many of us carry on that work by visiting the sick and home-bound, serving meals, or doing some other direct, close ministry. In what ways are you being invited to continue the work of Jesus at a time of physical/social distancing.***

## CONCLUDING RITES

### Closing Prayer

Leader: Nourished by God’s word and strengthened by this community,  
Let us pray together,

**ALL: Loving God, Holy One,  
Your desire is for our wholeness and well-being.  
We hold in tenderness and prayer the collective suffering of our world at this time.  
We grieve precious lives lost and vulnerable lives threatened.  
We ache for ourselves and our neighbors, standing before an uncertain future.  
We pray: may love, not fear, go viral. Inspire our leaders to discern and choose wisely, aligned with the common good.  
Help us to practice physical distancing, revealing to us new and creative ways to hold each other fast, so we may care for each other in tender solidarity.  
Call us to profound trust in your faithful presence,  
You, the God who does not abandon,  
You, the Holy One, breathing within us, breathing among us,  
breathing around us, in our beautiful yet wounded world. AMEN**

Adapted from “Prayer during a Pandemic” by Sr. Chris Koellhoffer, IHM

## **Blessing**

Leader: And may the God of hope fill us with every comfort and joy in believing.  
May the peace of Christ abound in our hearts and minds.  
and may the Holy Spirit gift and guide us  
*(making Sign of the Cross)* now and forever,

**ALL: AMEN**

## **Dismissal**

Leader: Our time of prayer and reflection has ended, and we go forth to be  
Christ's witnesses to all the earth! Alleluia! Alleluia!

**ALL: Thanks be to God! Alleluia! Alleluia!**