

Solemnity of the Ascension

Proclamation: Jesus loves me and calls me to be his disciple! I can follow him because Jesus is with the Father and sends me his Holy Spirit.

Praise and Prayer: "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." *Responsorial Psalm 47*

Jesus is our King, reigning over heaven and earth!

Worship the Lord: OUR GOD Chris Tomlin
OPEN UP THE HEAVENS Vertical Worship HOLY SPIRIT by Jesus Culture

Scripture: Matthew 28:16-20

Jesus gives his final instructions to the Apostles before returning to heaven. His words are for us too. So imagine yourself as one of the disciples in this passage:

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."

Lectio Divina: *Praying with God's Holy Word. Prayerfully read the Gospel passage above and use the questions below to guide your discussion.*

What words in the Gospel stand out to you? Try to find all the action words.

How much power does Jesus say he has? *Some* power? Or *ALL* power? And does Jesus promise to give the disciples this power so they can go out and make more disciples?

What else does he promise them? (clue: look at the last sentence). Do you want to GO and make disciples? Have a family discussion about how to do this and pray for more of Jesus' power so you can.

Visio Divina: *Praying with sacred art. Prayerfully study the painting (Ascension, by Francisco Camilo, 1651) and try to imagine that you are in the scene.*



Look at the painting carefully. Decide which Apostle you want to be and imagine yourself in the scene. You have just spent three years of your life with Jesus. You ate with him, camped out with him, followed him from town to town, saw him work amazing miracles and listened to all his teachings and parables. You saw him die on the cross and now it has been 40 days since he rose again. Jesus told you to meet him on the mountain today and you are all there together, wondering what will happen now. Jesus gives you a mission! He tells you to go into the whole world and make disciples. How are you possibly going to do such a huge thing as that? But wait – he says he is giving you his authority. And, he says to wait until you are “clothed with power” by the Holy Spirit. You are excited, and maybe a little bit afraid. But look! Where is Jesus going? He is starting to float off the ground! He is going up, up, up to the sky. Where is he going? Why is he leaving? Didn’t he just say, “and behold, I am with you always, unto the end of the age”? Are you feeling sad? Are you confused? Are you excited?

This great event is called the Ascension. Jesus returns to God the Father. Jesus told the disciples that he was going away so that he could prepare a place for each of them in Heaven AND so that he could send the Holy Spirit. He told them that it was *better* that he go away so that he could send the Holy Spirit. That was probably very hard to understand at first. But once the Holy Spirit came on Pentecost, they began to experience the closeness and power of Jesus like never before! Jesus’ promise to be with them always was true! Jesus wants YOU to experience his closeness and power through the Holy Spirit too! But wait, there’s more. Did you know that Jesus promised to return again? Yes, he did! It is called the “Second Coming” or the “Parousia”. The creator of the *Ascension* artwork put a clue in his painting – a clue that shows Jesus’ promise to come back again. Can you find the clue? Look at this detail from the painting:

Francisco Camilo painted Jesus’ footprints! They are a reminder to us that Jesus is real, that he really lived here on Earth, and that he is really coming back – coming back in glory! And do you want to know something really cool? It was not just a fun idea for the painter to draw the footprints. There is actually a tradition that Jesus left his footprints in the ground, just before he ascended! If you ever go to the Holy Land, go to see the Chapel of the Ascension on the Mount of Olives. There you will see what is believed to be the footprints of Jesus. Below is a picture. What do you think?



Called to Greatness: *Read today's Gospel one more time.* Did you hear what Jesus said? He said that he will be with us always! He can be with us always because of the Holy Spirit living in us. Pray that Jesus will make you more aware of his presence in you today.

Novena Prayer: Come, Holy Spirit!

Action Idea: Ask the Holy Spirit to tell you *who* you could share his love with this week: maybe someone in your family, a neighbor, a friend. Then ask the Holy Spirit what you could *do* to love that person. Then go do it!

Symbols of the Holy Spirit: Tongues of Fire



At Pentecost when the disciples were gathered in the Upper Room, fire in the shape of tongues descended on their heads and they were filled with the Holy Spirit. Fire is a common symbol of the Holy Spirit because he grants us energy and power to live for Christ and to proclaim the Gospel.