

## MARK 16:15-20

Jesus showed himself to the Eleven and said to them:

‘Go out to the whole world; proclaim the Good News to all creation. He who believes and is baptised will be saved; he who does not believe will be condemned. These are the signs that will be associated with believers: in my name they will cast out devils; they will have the gift of tongues; they will pick up snakes in their hands, and be unharmed should they drink deadly poison; they will lay their hands on the sick, who will recover.’

And so the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven: there at the right hand of God he took his place, while they, going out, preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word by the signs that accompanied it.

**COMMENTARY:** The gospel above marks the end of the appearances of Jesus after his Resurrection. He ascends into heaven and the followers will now await the Holy Spirit. We celebrate this next Sunday, the feast of Pentecost.

**In reading the above text it is important not to get tied up with the gift of tongues and picking up snakes etc! The scholars tell us that this section of the gospel was probably added by someone other than St Mark.**

**What is important is the command to go out to the whole world and proclaim the Good News. When Jesus taught us to pray he revealed his vision: *you will be done on earth as in heaven.* We are the ones entrusted with this vision.**

# Liturgy of The Word

May 12

THE ASCENSION OF OUR LORD



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

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.

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.

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.

## ACTS 1:1-11

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.'

**COMMENTARY: To have someone's spirit is akin to the person being present. Jesus promises the Spirit of God to his disciples. They still had not yet awoken to who Jesus really was. This is seen by Peter's question to Jesus. They still think he will be a political king!**

**Jesus ascends into heaven so that he can send the Holy Spirit, i.e. the Spirit of God. This leads us to the question: if we have the Spirit of God with us, who are we? Why have we been given such a gift?**

## EPHESIANS 4:1-13

I, the prisoner in the Lord, implore you to lead a life worthy of your vocation. Bear with one another charitably, in complete selflessness, gentleness and patience. Do all you can to preserve the unity of the Spirit by the peace that binds you together.

There is one Body, one Spirit, just as you were all called into one and the same hope when you were called. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God who is Father of all, over all, through all and within all.

Each one of us, however, has been given his own share of grace, given as Christ allotted it. It was said that he would: *When he ascended to the height, he captured prisoners, he gave gifts to all.*

When it says, 'he ascended', what can it mean if not that he descended right down to the lower regions of the earth? The one who rose higher than all the heavens to fill all things is none other than the one who descended. And to some, his gift was that they should be apostles; to some, prophets; to some, evangelists; to some, pastors and teachers; so that the saints together make a unity in the work of service, building up the body of Christ. In this way we are all to come to unity in our faith and in our knowledge of the Son of God, until we become the perfect human, fully mature with the fullness of Christ himself.

**COMMENTARY: Claiming Christ as our Saviour means we live the mentality of Jesus. We are One Body. We all have gifts as spelled out in the last paragraph. We are in the process of becoming perfect. This is true of the Church, as well as ourselves as individuals. There many ways to serve within the Church, which is The Body of Christ.**