

## THURSDAY 18 MAY

*Ascension Day*

### FIRST READING – Acts 1.3-11

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

After his suffering and death,  
Jesus presented himself alive  
to the apostles,  
with many convincing proofs,  
appearing to them  
during forty days,  
and speaking  
of the kingdom of God.  
Jesus said to them, 'Do not  
leave Jerusalem,  
but wait here  
for the promise of the Father.

John baptised with water,  
but you will be baptised  
with the Holy Spirit  
not many days from now.'

The apostles asked Jesus, 'Lord,  
is this the time  
when you will restore  
the kingdom of Israel?'

Jesus replied, 'You cannot know  
every time or season  
in the purposes  
of the Father.

But you will receive power  
when the Holy Spirit  
comes upon you.

And you will be my witnesses  
in Jerusalem,  
in all Judea,  
in Samaria,  
and to the ends of the earth.'

Then, as they were watching,  
he was taken up,  
and a cloud  
hid him  
from their sight.

And as they looked intently into the sky,  
two figures in white robes appeared,  
saying, 'Men of Galilee,  
why do you stand here  
looking into the sky?

This Jesus  
has been  
taken up from you  
into heaven,  
and will return  
in the same way  
you saw him go.'

This is the word of the Lord.

### SECOND READING – Ephesians 1.17-23

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Ephesians.

The power of God  
has raised Christ from the dead,  
to God's right hand on high,  
far above all earthly powers -  
above every other name  
in this world or the next;  
and has made Christ  
the head of the church,  
and has made the church  
the body of Christ.

So now may your hearts be filled  
with the same power of God, which is  
the gift of God  
to all who believe.

May your hearts be filled  
with confidence  
for the future to which  
God has called you,  
and with all the glorious riches  
that God gives to you,  
and to all the saints.

And may the God of glory,  
the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
give you a spirit  
of wisdom and insight,  
that you may continue to grow  
in the knowledge of God.  
This is the word of the Lord.

### GOSPEL – Luke 24.44-53

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ  
according to Luke.

Jesus opened the minds of the disciples  
to understand the scriptures, saying:  
'Everything that is written about me,  
in the law of Moses, in the prophets,  
and in the psalms, must be fulfilled:  
that the Messiah is to suffer,  
and to rise from the dead on the third day;  
and that repentance, and forgiveness,  
will then be proclaimed, in his name,  
to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

You are witnesses to these things.

And now I am sending you  
what my Father promised;  
so stay here in the city  
until you have been clothed with power from on high.'  
Then he led them out of Jerusalem  
to Bethany,  
and there, lifting up his hands,  
he blessed them.

And while he was blessing them,  
he withdrew from them,  
and was taken up into heaven.

And they worshipped him.  
They returned to Jerusalem  
filled with joy.

And they were continually in the temple,  
praising God.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.