

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.