

Transformation – NOW!
ASCENSION

Opening Prayer

from the MU Wave of Prayer - Guyana

Risen, Ascended, Glorified Lord, we worship you.
May the wonder of your Ascension inspire us,
and the gifts of your Spirit empower us
to go forward to 'make disciples of all nations.' Amen.

Hymn: Hail the day that sees him rise
sung by St Martin's Voices

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Hail the day that sees him rise, *Alleluia!*
To his throne above the skies; *Alleluia!*
Christ, the Lamb for sinners given, *Alleluia!*
Enters now the highest heaven: *Alleluia!*

There for him high triumph waits: *Alleluia!*
Lift your heads, eternal gates; *Alleluia!*
He hath conquered death and sin: *Alleluia!*
Take the King of Glory in! *Alleluia!*

Lord, though parted from our sight, *Alleluia!*
Far above the starry height, *Alleluia!*
Grant our hearts may thither rise, *Alleluia!*
Seeking thee above the skies: *Alleluia!*

Dear Theophilus, in the first volume of this book I wrote on everything that Jesus began to do and teach until the day he said good-bye to the apostles, the ones he had chosen through the Holy Spirit, and was taken up to heaven. After his death, he presented himself alive to them in many different settings over a period of forty days. In face-to-face meetings, he talked to them about things concerning the kingdom of God. As they met and ate meals together, he told them that they were on no account to leave Jerusalem but “must wait for what the Father promised: the promise you heard from me. John baptized in water; you will be baptized in the Holy Spirit. And soon.”

When they were together for the last time they asked, “Master, are you going to restore the kingdom to Israel now? Is this the time?”

He told them, “You don’t get to know the time. Timing is the Father’s business. What you’ll get is the Holy Spirit. And when the Holy Spirit comes on you, you will be able to be my witnesses in Jerusalem, all over Judea and Samaria, even to the ends of the world.”

These were his last words. As they watched, he was taken up and disappeared in a cloud. They stood there, staring into the empty sky. Suddenly two men appeared—in white robes! They said, “You Galileans!—why do you just stand here looking up at an empty sky? This very Jesus who was taken up from among you to heaven will come as certainly—and mysteriously—as he left.”

Reflection

© *Wild Goose Publications*

In a cloud.

A cloud?

A bit dramatic wasn’t it, Jesus?

A bit over the top!

Hands raised.

Floating heavenwards

And I'll lay odds that
future artists
will dress you in shining white,
and paint the sky deep blue –
to 'match' your eyes.

OK – so there were some precedents:
Elijah and his chariots
and that fiery cloudy pillar thing that moved around the wilderness;
but those were the old ways –
you aren't like that.
Is this really what you want us to remember about you, Jesus?
That you disappeared in a cloud
and that you now live somewhere above the skies,
way beyond our reach?

What about your stories, your friendship;
your tears, your pain, your laughter?
What about the way you believed in us,
trusted us,
sent us out to teach and heal?
I'm not sure that you being alive somewhere
where we cannot see you, talk with you,
laugh and cry with you,
is going to be much help to us, Jesus.

Please, can't you find a way of living with us,
close enough somehow for us to know that you're near?
You said something once about a Spirit,
a holy Spirit from God,
who would come to us.
Does that mean you're coming back to us?

And if you are –
no dramatics this time, please Jesus.
Just come back to us quietly ...
No more clouds!

Hymn: Breathe on me, breath of God
sung by St Martin's Voices

Edwin Hatch (1835-89)

Breathe on me, Breath of God
fill me with life anew,
that I may love what thou dost love,
and do what thou wouldst do.

Breathe on me, Breath of God,
until my heart is pure;
until with thee I will one will,
to do and to endure.

Breathe on me, Breath of God,
till I am wholly thine;
until this earthly part of me
glows with thy fire divine.

Breathe on me, Breath of God:
so shall I never die,
but live with thee the perfect life
of thine eternity.

Prayer for Ascension Day

John Harvey (adapted)

Let us give thanks

for all the signs of the Lordship of Jesus
in our world today:
For Christian men and women
elected to public office;
for those who serve Christ
in other fields of public service;
for all who seek to walk Christ's way

in the world of business, commerce,
and industry;
for those who seek to honour Jesus
in the caring professions.

They seek to honour Christ;
and we honour them.

For congregations quietly working
to welcome refugees and asylum-seekers;
for men and women of faith struggling
to overcome the debts of nations,
to feed starving people
and to house the homeless ones;
for all teachers, parents, carers and youth workers
guiding, nurturing and encouraging those in their care,
and for people of all ages
celebrating the Kingdom.

They seek to honour Christ;
and we honour them.
Amen.

Mary Sumner prayer

All this day, O Lord,
let me touch as many lives as possible for thee;
and every life I touch,
do thou by thy spirit quicken:
whether through the word I speak,
the prayer I breathe,
or the life I live.
Amen.

Hymn: Forth in the peace of Christ we go

sung by St Martin's Voices

Forth in the peace of Christ we go;
Christ to the world with joy we bring;
Christ in our minds, Christ on our lips,
Christ in our hearts, the world's true King.

King of our hearts, Christ makes us kings;
kingship with him, his servants gain;
with Christ, the Servant-Lord of all,
Christ's world we serve to share Christ's reign.

Priests of the world, Christ sends us forth
this world of time to consecrate,
our world of sin by grace to heal,
Christ's world in Christ to re-create.

Prophets of Christ, we hear his Word;
he claims our minds, to search his ways;
he claims our lips, to speak his truth;
he claims our hearts, to sing his praise.

We are his Church, he makes us one;
here is one hearth for all to find;
here is one flock, one Shepherd-King;
here is one faith, one heart, one mind.

James Quinn (1919-2010)

© 1969, 1987 OCP Publications, 5536 NE Hassalo, Portland, OR 97213

All rights reserved. Used with permission

Blessing

May the Spirit,
who hovered over the waters when the world was created,
breathe into you the life he gives.
Amen.

May the Spirit,
who overshadowed the Virgin when the eternal Son came among us,
make you joyful in the service of the Lord.
Amen.

May the Spirit,
who set the Church on fire upon the Day of Pentecost,
bring the world alive with the love of the risen Christ.
Amen.

And the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.
Amen.

from Common Worship

©The Archbishops' Council

Material: as stated
Theme music: 'Overflowing grace' by Catherine Hilton
Theme image: Lucjan on Pixabay.com
Readers: Barbara Pye, Ian Butterworth, Denise Smith, Wendy
Cox, Doreen Smith, Kirsty Screeton

CCLI: 5097385

**Prayers next month will be on 13th June 2024
CALLED TO SERVE**