

**Rebuilding Hope and Confidence -
The Significance of the Ascension**

Welcome and Opening Prayer

When Jesus left this world for the last time on that first Ascension and went into God's world, the world from which he came, the disciples were devastated. They had relied on Jesus for so long – relied on his guidance and on his strength and now they were on their own and very afraid. They really did not believe they could carry on his work, spread the Good News that he had brought. They hadn't got the words, they hadn't got the confidence. Then came Pentecost and all these things were given to them in the gift of the Holy Spirit.

For all that we have received the gift of the Spirit in baptism and in the sacraments we too feel we lack the words, lack the confidence, so we keep quiet, we avoid sharing our Good News. Yet however much we tell God we are not the right people to continue the work of Jesus he keeps putting people in our way who need to hear that News, he doesn't seem to listen, he continues to ask us to share it.

Lord open us to your Spirit as you opened the disciples, and inspire us again to be tellers of that Good News to those who need to hear it. Amen

Hymn: Christ, whose glory fills the skies

sung by St Martin's Voices

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

- 1 Christ, whose glory fills the skies,
Christ, the true, the only light,
sun of righteousness, arise,
triumph o'er the shades of night;
day-spring from on high, be near;
day-star, in my heart appear.

- 2 Dark and cheerless is the morn
unaccompanied by thee:
joyless is the day's return,
till thy mercy's beams I see,
till they inward light impart,
glad my eyes, and warm my heart.

- 3 Visit then this soul of mine;
pierce the gloom of sin and grief;
fill me, radiancy divine;
scatter all my unbelief;
more and more thyself display,
shining to the perfect day.



Reflection for the Ascension

Written by Loretta F Ross

*After Jesus said these things, as they were watching,
he was lifted up and a cloud took him out of their sight.*

Acts 1: 6-8a, 9 (CEV)

Something new is coming,
something incredible,
beyond imagination
and manipulation.

Something promised.

Well maybe.
That is to say, we hope it is.

He said it would.

We watched him rise up out on the hill,
wind blustering all around,
and the jagged saw of goodbye chewing us apart.

Don't go. Don't go. We love you so!

And the love filling us up and tipping us over
with its force.

And us, breathless and blown,
rolling and tumbling down the mountain
flung and spinning out from the Center of that splendor.

His Words,
Imprinted on our souls like a bright tattoo.

And the angels saying, Get up. Get going!

He said to wait.

Wait.

There would be more, something else,
spirit he called it, who will help us remember it all,
help us catch our breath,
and give us legs for such a world, as we have glimpsed.

Oh, why not Him? Why this spirit thing,
when we had a love
we could hold in our arms and look in the eye?

The Father, reaching down into humanity,
snatches back the offspring
of his selfless, effervescent generosity.

Dear God,
catching up very God of very God, begotten not made,
by the scruff of his collar
and drawing him back into your joyful dance,

what are you thinking,
cutting in like this, sweeping off with our partner?

Life is eternal – that is good news.
But what to do with the life and the love,
left here as we are, knocking about in the flesh?

Please do not ask of us such vulnerability,
this being clueless, with nothing to hang onto,
suspended between cloud and fire,
dangling from only a dim memory and a bright promise.

Reflective Music

A Better Tomorrow – for piano and strings

The Collect for Ascension Day

Grant, we pray, almighty God,
that as we believe your only-begotten Son
our Lord Jesus Christ
to have ascended into the heavens,
so we in heart and mind may also ascend
and with him continually dwell;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Bible Reading

I John 3: 1-7 (NIV)

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure. Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness. But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him. Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. The one who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous.

Prayer of Petition

Written by Bishop Telmor Sartison

Almighty God,
we praise and thank you for making us children of God,
not through our own power and piety
but through our baptism
into the crucified and risen Lord Jesus Christ.

We turn daily to you,
and in that turning we find peace, courage and purpose.
Make your whole church a witness
to the great good news of Christ's resurrection.

God of the risen Christ, **hear our prayer.**

Diocesan Prayer

Heavenly Father, as we meet
as members of the Mothers' Union in Manchester,
may we know Your presence and hear Your word.
Teach us how best to serve You,
seeing not just the needs of this Diocese
but those of the wider world.
Help us at all times to trust in You
and seek to do Your will.
Fill us with Your spirit, encourage us, use us and bless us,
that we may have strength to follow Your way.
We pray in sure hope and the assurance of Your power.
Amen

Hymn: We have a Gospel to Proclaim

Sung by St Martin's

Edward J Burns (b 1938), Tune Fulda

We have a gospel to proclaim,
good news for all throughout the earth;
the gospel of a Saviour's name,
we sing His glory, tell His worth.

Tell of His birth at Bethlehem,
not in a royal house or hall
but in a stable dark and dim,
the Word made flesh, a light for all.

Tell of His death at Calvary,
hated by those He came to save,
in lonely suffering on the cross,
for all He loved His life He gave.

Tell of that glorious Easter morn,
empty the tomb, for He was free.
He broke the power of death and hell
that we might share His victory.

Tell of His reign at God's right hand,
by all creation glorified,
He sends His Spirit on His Church,
to live for Him, the Lamb who died.

Now we rejoice to name Him King,
Jesus is Lord of all the earth,
this gospel message we proclaim,
we sing His glory, tell His worth.

Benediction

People of God,

let's not just stand here, gazing into heaven
as the disciples did after they saw Jesus leave.

Instead, let's take up the mission Jesus left us:
to be his witnesses,

to tell everyone we meet who Jesus is,
and how he has changed us.

And may the grace of God, the love of Jesus Christ,
and the presence of the Holy Spirit go with us all. Amen.

Dismissal

Go in the peace of Christ

Alleluia, Alleluia

Thank you for joining in with Thursday Prayers.

Choral music: The Church of England St Martin in the Fields

Theme music: Catherine Hilton

Reflective music: astrofreq from Pixabay

Readers: Ian Butterworth, Marc Greenough, Denise Smith,
Patricia Stokes, Yvonne Jennings, Christine Sharp

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**Next Thursday Prayers will be on 10th June with the
theme of 'Moving forward in Hope'.**