



UNITED IN PRAYER

A RESOURCE FOR FAMILIES, HOUSEHOLDS, & INDIVIDUALS

ASCENSION OF THE LORD

(YEAR A)

24 May 2020



GATHER

BE IN THE PRESENT MOMENT, RECONISING GOD IN OUR MIDST

SET UP A PRAYER SPACE

Gather what you can from around your house to create a prayer space or focus for the time of prayer, ideally including a candle (representing the Paschal Candle at Easter).

As you light your candle; pray the following words...

**Nau mai haere mai e Hehu Karaiti ko
koe te rawhiti o te ao.**

Welcome Jesus you are the light of the world.

*See our website for a full 'Blessing of
Light' Morning Prayer.*



SING/LISTEN TO A HYMN

Mighty to Save – Reuben Morgan & Ben Fielding

<https://youtu.be/-khYvGwEqmo?t=45>

Glory and Praise to our God – Dan Schutte

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c7GiWZG-AI4>

OPENING PRAYER

Grant, we pray, almighty God,
that we, who believe your only-begotten Son,
our redeemer, ascended this day to heaven,
may also in heart and mind there continually dwell;
through Jesus Christ
who is alive with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen.



WE ARE AN
Easter people
AND ALLELUIA IS OUR SONG.



PROCLAIM

TIME TO READ THE SCRIPTURES

Here you will find references for this weekend's readings.

While we cannot physically gather for Mass, the Word of God is what can nourish us.

THIS WEEKS READINGS

Open a Bible or visit universalis.com to find the readings.

FIRST READING: Acts 1:1-11

As the Apostles were looking on, Jesus was lifted up.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (46) 47:2-3, 6-9

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

You can pray the Psalm by listening along to it sung [here](#).

SECOND READING: Ephesians 1:1-17-23

In the body he was put to death, in the spirit he was raised to life

GOSPEL: Matthew 28:16-20

Go and make disciples of all nations

The eleven disciples set out for Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had arranged to meet them. When they saw him they fell down before him, though some hesitated. Jesus came up and spoke to them. He said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, make disciples of all the nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.'



"AND KNOW THAT I AM
with you always;
YES, TO THE END
OF TIME."



BREAK

REFLECT ON THE SCRIPTURES

This section of the prayer resource is designed to be adapted for people depending on who and how you are gathering to pray. This week you can find reflections for children and for everyone.

1. FOR CHILDREN
2. FOR EVERYONE

1. FOR CHILDREN

What did you hear in the Gospel today?

In today's Gospel, Jesus tells his disciples to go and make disciples of all nations. The words in this reading are the last words that Jesus says to his disciples in Matthew's Gospel.

Throughout New Zealand, people haven't been able to travel for quite a while now, but **have you ever gone to the airport to farewell someone who was going overseas? Who were you saying goodbye to?**

What sort of things do people say before they go on a long journey? In today's story we hear about Jesus saying farewell to his friends as he goes back to his Father. But he tells us that he will come back, and we will not be alone.

Jesus leaves a special job for his friends to do. **Have you ever been sent to do a special job for someone?**

Jesus sends his friends out to the ends of the earth. **What were they being sent to do? Did they do it?**

What did Jesus' friends do next?

Do you think they missed Jesus?

Who are Jesus' friends now?

What does Jesus want us to do?

Can children really do what Jesus was asking?

Today we are not that different from those who heard the teachings of the first disciples. We too become members of the Church through Baptism. The teachings of others and the example of their lives and their actions make us want to be members of the Church. Of course the saints and other holy people are

witnesses to Christian discipleship but so are members of our family and our local Church. Everyone who helps us to understand what it means to be a Christian is doing what Jesus told his first disciples to do: go forth and make disciples.

Jesus told his friends that he would always be with them. **How is Jesus with us today?**

Activity suggestions

- **Play this memory game with your children.** Sit in a circle and start the game by saying: *I'm going on a camping trip; I'd better bring a tent.* The child to your right should say next: *That's a good idea. I'm going on a camping trip too. I'll bring a tent and a torch.* The next person should continue in this manner, repeating the previous items and adding a new item. When everyone has had a few turns, say: *We started out with just one thing and look at how many we have now!*
- **Link to game:** The eleven disciples who heard Jesus say those things couldn't possibly go to every place in the whole world, but they did tell the people they met how Jesus had changed their lives. Then the people that they told went on to tell the story to others and added what Jesus was doing for them. The story just kept on going—and it's still going today as today we are talking about Jesus. Jesus promises to be with us until the end of the world. By telling the stories of his life, we remember how much he means to us.



BREAK

REFLECT ON THE SCRIPTURES



2. FOR EVERYONE

Today we celebrate the Ascension of Jesus into Heaven, 40 days after Easter. The First Reading recounts this episode at the beginning of the Acts of the Apostles. Here we hear about the final separation of the Lord Jesus from his disciples and from this world. The Gospel of Matthew, however, focuses on Jesus' mandate to his disciples: the invitation to go out, to set out, in order to proclaim to all nations his message of salvation. "To go" or better, "depart" becomes the key word of today's feast: Jesus departs to the Father and commands his disciples depart for the world.

Pope Francis puts it this way...

"Jesus departs, he ascends to Heaven, that is, he returns to the Father from whom he had been sent to the world. He finished his work, thus, he returns to the Father. But this does not mean a separation, for he remains forever with us, in a new way. By his ascension, the Risen Lord draws the gaze of the Apostles — and our gaze — to the heights of Heaven to show us that the end of our journey is the Father. He himself said that he would go to prepare a place for us in Heaven. Yet, Jesus remains present and active in the affairs of human history through the power and the gifts of his Spirit; he is beside each of us: even if we do not see him with our eyes, He is there! He accompanies us, he guides us, he takes us by the hand and he lifts us up when we fall down. The risen Jesus is close to persecuted and discriminated Christians; he is close to every man and woman who suffers. He is close to us all; he is here, ... the Lord is with us! Do you believe this? Then let's say it together: the Lord is with us!"

Pope Francis continues, saying...

"Jesus is present also through the Church, which He sent to extend his mission. Jesus' last message to his disciples is the mandate to depart: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" (Mt 28:19). It is a clear mandate, not just an option! The Christian community is a community "going forth", "in departure". More so: the Church was born "going forth." ... To his missionary disciples Jesus says: "I am with you always, to the close of the age" (v. 20). Alone, without Jesus, we can do nothing! In Apostolic work our own strengths, our resources, our structures do not suffice, even if they are necessary. Without the presence of the Lord and the power of his Spirit our work, though it may be well organized, winds up being ineffective. And thus, we go to tell the nations who Jesus is."

When we celebrate the Ascension we are aware that Christ is seen through the works and words of those who are united to him through baptism: the church. To say that one is Christian – that we will represent Christ, making him present here and now, is an awesome mission. **You may like to ask Jesus how he is calling you to live out this mission in a new way. How can you make Christ present here and now in the week ahead?**

The Ascension is not a cosy feast: it should make us feel uncomfortable. If we believe that Christ has ascended, then we need to be willing to challenge corruption, untruth, intolerance, and all that enslaves. **Have we been standing idle looking into heaven for too long? How can we shift our eyes enough to see even more the needs of our neighbour's and of the world?**

Jesus' final words are an important encouragement to us, especially at this time. Even though we cannot physically participate in the sacraments, Jesus assures us that he is with us always. **Spend a moment in prayer, thanking Jesus for his abiding presence and asking for an ongoing sense of this closeness as you continue living as a missionary disciple.**

SEND

SENT TO LIVE WHAT YOU HAVE RECEIVED

CLOSING PRAYER

Dear Lord Jesus Christ, right before your Ascension into heaven you told your apostles to be witnesses to the ends of the earth upon receiving the Holy Spirit. May we also be inspired to spread your Gospel message in word and deed, according to your will for us. And may we do so joyfully, with your help, your guidance, and your grace. And remembering this glorious event, help us to seek what is above, where you are seated at the right hand of God the Father. Amen.

SING/LISTEN TO A HYMN

Glorious Day - Passion feat. Kristian Stanfill

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gkJJ2XZwDHc>

Send us Out – John Michael Talbot

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sHGpfSVjUJk>



UNITED

This resource has been developed during the Covid-19 pandemic to assist families, households and individuals to pray together. We may not be able to gather to pray together in large groups at the moment, but the Church is still open. In our current circumstance, the domestic Church becomes our primary way of being able to recognise Christ in our midst.

To stay up to date with resources, make sure you sign up to our weekly e-newsletter at <http://pndiocese.org.nz/newsletter> and visit <https://pndiocese.org.nz/covid19-united/>