

Seventh Sunday of Easter

Prayers, Readings, Reflection and Song.

“Welcome to another short act of worship for the Parish Church of St Martin. For those who are able to follow it as written or listen in, I hope it offers some comfort, encouragement and a sense of being together despite the distance between us.” Rev Jonny



*Be still, and draw yourself closer to the God who rests beside you,
before you and within you.*

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
All Amen.

The Lord be with you
All and also with you.

Alleluia! Christ is risen!
All He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

The Spirit of the Lord fills the world
and knows our every word and deed.
Let us then open ourselves to the Lord
and confess our sins in penitence and faith.

You raise the dead to life in the Spirit:
Lord, have mercy.
All Lord, have mercy.

You bring pardon and peace to the broken in heart:
Christ, have mercy.
All Christ, have mercy.

You make one by your Spirit the torn and divided:
Lord, have mercy.
All Lord, have mercy.

God promises us a place with him for ever and he has
raised us to new life in Jesus Christ our Lord. May we
know his forgiveness and peace and the freedom to serve
him in newness of life.
All Amen

The Collect for the day

O God the King of glory,
you have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ
with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven:
we beseech you, leave us not comfortless,
but send your Holy Spirit to strengthen us
and exalt us to the place where our Saviour Christ is gone
before,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All **Amen.**

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

Acts of the Apostles 1:6-14

So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?” He replied, “It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day’s journey away. When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas,

Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.
All sing **Praise to you O Christ.**

Reflection

There's something uncomfortable about the Ascension – something that just doesn't quite sit right. I get this feeling every time I look at the ascension window above the High Altar in Church. Take a look at it with me now, and ask yourself how it makes you feel. [It's on the front page of this booklet]

Let's start with Jesus (a very good place to start). Here is the God we have come to know and love as a walking, talking, laughing, crying, living, dying person. A friend. One of us. Who has his feet firmly planted on the ground, his hands in the dirt and his whole being rooted in the reality of our lives. And now he floats. Drifting above us and away from us.

What are we to make of this transformation? Our Lord has revealed himself to be beyond our reality, and beyond our abilities. To be one of us no longer. Wasn't it better when Jesus had his feet on the ground?

Then look at the faces of the disciples. Confusion, despair, anger even, too.

They have already lived through the trauma of their friend's betrayal, arrest and execution, and I suppose the trauma of his resurrection too. That can't have been easy – to see the dead walk and talk and eat with you. In the Upper Room, and out on the beach. How much can one disciple take?

And now this. Another goodbye. And so soon.

“There is still so much work to be done, don't abandon us now. The Romans are still here. The Temple authorities still despise us. We don't feel safe. We don't feel ready. Not yet.”

And yet, as always, Jesus insists on using people before they're ready, before they've got it all figured out—like Abraham, Esther, Moses, Mary Magdalene, Peter and Paul.

He does things in his own time. In God's time – in God's good time.

And so here we are, charged with being his hands in the world. His eyes. His laughter. His tears. His healing. His teaching. His feet on the ground.

As one theologian put it: *"The absence of Jesus makes room for the possibility of his presence through his people."*

But it's tough. Maybe we just can't get over how miraculous and infuriating and profound and ridiculous it is that Jesus trusts us, that the God of the universe allows sinners to do His work. It's quite an unconventional plan, and there are days when I'm convinced it's going to fail.

But we won't know until we try.

So I suppose that on Ascension Day, we have to stop standing there staring at the bottom of Jesus' feet, and instead get to work—feeding, listening, healing, teaching, loving, praying, sharing, and caring.

One day at a time. Ready or not. But asking for the help of the Holy Spirit every step of the way.

I am reminded of the prayer of St Teresa of Avila, which seems like a good place to end:

Christ has no body now but ours.

No hands, no feet on earth but ours.

Ours are the eyes through which he looks compassion on this world.

Ours are the feet with which he walks to do good.

Ours are the hands through which he blesses all the world.

Ours are the hands, ours are the feet, ours are the eyes, we are his body.

Christ has no body now on earth but ours.

Amen

Song

**God forgave my sin in Jesus' name,
I've been born again in Jesus' name,
and in Jesus' name I come to you
to share his love as he told me to.**

He said:

***'Freely, freely you have received;
freely, freely give.***

***Go in my name and because you believe,
others will know that I live.'***

**All power is given in Jesus' name,
in earth and heaven in Jesus' name,
and in Jesus' name I come to you
to share his power as he told me to.**

Prayers of Intercession

Pray for one another – those in our church community

Pray for the Parish, the Island and the World

Pray for the sick, the isolated, the anxious and depressed

Pray for the dying, and those who mourn

Pray for yourselves, and for your own needs

Lord, come to bless us
All and fill us with your Spirit

The Intercessions may end as follows

Merciful Father

**All Accept these prayers
for the sake of your son,
our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen**

The Peace

God has made us one in Christ.
He has set his seal upon us and, as a pledge of what is to come,
has given the Spirit to dwell in our hearts. Alleluia.
The peace of the Lord be always with you.

All **and also with you.**

Let us pray with confidence, as our Saviour taught us
All **Our Father**
who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from
evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory
For ever and ever. Amen.

The Blessing.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing,
through the power of the Holy Spirit;
and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and
the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always

All **Amen.**

Go in the peace of Christ. Alleluia! Alleluia!
All **Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!**



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