

Cycle A – Ascension of the Lord – May 17, 2026

World Communications Day

“Why do you stand looking up toward heaven? ...”

OPENING PRAYER (Psalm 47)

All: Alleluia, alleluia!

Leader: Clap your hands all you peoples;
shout to God with loud songs of joy.

All: For the Lord, the Most High, is awesome, a
great king over all the earth.

Leader: God has gone up with a shout,
the Lord with the sound of a trumpet.

All: Sing praises to God, sing praises;
sing praises to our King, sing praises.
Amen. Alleluia.



First Reading – Acts 1:1-11

Comparing the various resurrection appearances and chronologies across the four gospels raises questions. Only Luke places 40 days between the resurrection and the ascension. Luke is not interested in a linear chronology (*chronos*) but in using the number 40, he draws strong parallels with other key events in salvation history (employing *kairos* non-linear “God’s time”). The Israelites spent 40 years in the desert, and Jesus spent 40 days in the desert: it is a number of importance and symbolic meaning. Jesus’ visible, tangible presence needs to end in order for the Spirit to come to the apostles, which in turn starts the ministry of the early church.

1. Ascension is about letting go – have you ever had an “ascension-type” experience?
2. How do you understand the meaning of the number 40?

Second Reading – Ephesians 1:17-23

Given the minuscule size of the early church it is amazing to hear in Paul’s letter the cosmic size of the Christian vision and the church’s perceived mission. Paul is certain: the resurrection, ascension and glory of Jesus the Christ is the Father’s doing. This cosmic vision – of Jesus as Lord over all creation – is shared with all who believe, as a rich and divine inheritance.

1. What part do you play in helping to make visible this cosmic vision of the risen Christ?
2. How do you translate such a cosmic vision into everyday life?

Gospel Reading – Matthew 28:16-20

For Matthew, and for John, ascension coincided with the resurrection, thus completing Christ's glory in heaven. The end of Matthew's Gospel has Jesus declaring his authority and commissioning the apostles to carry on his work of spreading the Good News of God's reign of peace, justice and love.

1. This scene takes place on a mountain – what other scenes with Jesus take place on a mountain? What, in your opinion, is the importance of the mountain?
2. How do you express the Great Commission to “make disciples, baptize and teach?”

LIVING THE WORD

God's challenge – make an effort this week to connect with a newly baptized/confirmed parishioner.

PRAYING THE WORD

Intercession: We pray for those newly baptized and received in the church at Easter; and for all of us as we support them in becoming an evangelizing presence in God's mission. We pray to the Lord.

(Invite personal intentions, ending with “Our Father...”)

Concluding Prayer:

*Leader: God of glory, who has exalted our Lord and Saviour
and commissioned his followers
to teach and baptize.*

**All: We offer you our praise,
we offer you our lives in service of the Gospel.**

*Leader: You, Lord Jesus, are the hope to which you call us,
seated at the right hand of God
and promising to be with us to the end of the age.*

**All: Guide our hearts into becoming
a compassionate and radiant presence of your love
in order to draw all people to yourself.
Alleluia. Amen.**

Leader: Let us share with one another the peace of the risen Lord.