

THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD



Witnesses to the Ends of the Earth

God of all ages,
you have been our guardian and guide
from the creation of the world to the
present age.

Empower us with your Spirit,
and bless us with understanding as we
seek to do your will.

May we be your witnesses in the world,
in our homes, and to neighbors
and strangers.

May your Holy Spirit be with us today and
every day,

our constant guide and our hope in times
of trouble,

as we grow in faithfulness and generosity,
as we seek to be witnesses
beyond boundaries.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

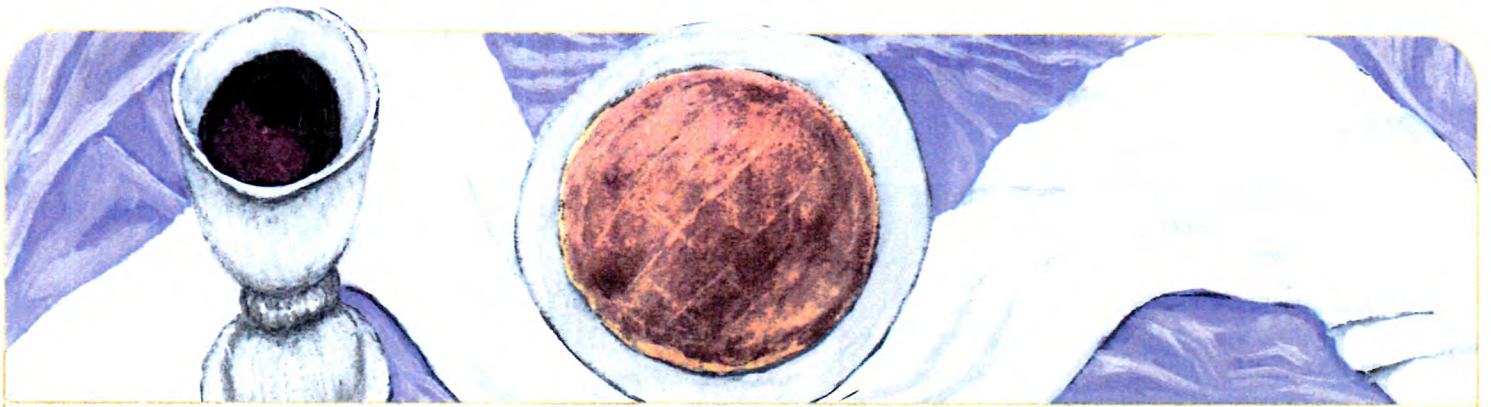
May 28, 2017

I Am with You Always

Today's Readings: Acts 1:1-11; Psalm 47:2-3, 6-7, 8-9; Ephesians 1:17-23; Matthew 28:16-20. The last directive Jesus gives his disciples, as he gathers with them atop a mountain, is to go out to the whole world, to bring others into the faithful fold, and to remember that he is always with them. That message is for us, too. We have a responsibility to spread the Good News. In *The Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis states that we can bring the Good News to friends and strangers in the workplace, in the public square, or on a journey. This preaching, he says, is respectful and gentle and begins with personal dialogue.

The challenge is always to break out of the secure inner circle of family or parish or small organization and go

out beyond, often into unknown territory. So this Easter season, consider how you practice your faith beyond the family home. Discover a new place for your interests within the parish, where you might have to learn something different about your faith. Perhaps you might want to sponsor someone who is interested in becoming Catholic. Going beyond our comfort zone is a challenge, but we are not alone. St. Paul tells us to put all things—all faith, uncertainty, and hope—beneath Christ's feet, for he is the head of the Church. And Jesus himself, as he is to ascend into heaven, assures us that he is with us always, until the end of the age. We need to always be confident of that.



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, May 29 The Holy Spirit

In the First Reading, Paul is confronted with the statement that some disciples have never even heard of the Holy Spirit. As odd as that may sound, we often do not understand or teach about the Holy Spirit, whose power and presence were promised to us by Jesus. The unifying power of the Holy Spirit is singular. The next time you participate in the Eucharist, notice the references to the Holy Spirit, who makes all one. *Today's Readings: Acts 19:1-8; Psalm 68:2-3ab, 4-5acd, 6-7ab; John 16:29-33.*

Tuesday, May 30 The Hour Has Come

Both Paul, in the First Reading, and Jesus, in the Gospel, are beginning to say goodbye. How do we prepare to say goodbye to family and friends? The struggle is one of loss and deep love. Knowing that someone will be enjoying the Kingdom of God is at odds with knowing that we can no longer share with them the Kingdom insights here. *Today's Readings: Acts 20:17-27; Psalm 68:10-11, 20-21; John 17:1-11a.*

Wednesday, May 31 Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

The beautiful feast of two pregnant cousins visiting one another is a celebration of family support through prayer and particular insight. Elizabeth, much older, and Mary, much younger, find in one another a way to express the holiness of each other's pregnancy, and to accept whatever God has in mind for them and their offspring. We might want to think of how we can be supportive to soon-to-be mothers. *Today's Readings: Zephaniah 3:14-18a; Isaiah 12:2-3, 4bcd, 5-6; Luke 1:39-56.*

Thursday, June 1 Truth and Belief

How do we know what the truth is? Today's reading from the Acts of the Apostles begins with a dispute over St. Paul and the truth that he presented. How do we determine the truth—or truths—of our faith? The first response should be one of prayer, with Jesus' actions as a model for a prayerful life. Not only does Jesus give us an example of always relying on prayer to mark his life, his final prayers are an appeal to unity among believers. To determine the truth, we must be united in our belief and trust in God. *Today's Readings: Acts 22:30; 23:6-11; Psalm 16:1-2a, 5, 7-8, 9-10, 11; John 17:20-26.*

Friday, June 2 Sts. Marcellinus and Peter, Martyrs

Marcellinus and Peter, two martyrs of the persecutions of the early fourth century, were so respected that they continue to be mentioned in Eucharistic Prayer I. Marcellinus was a priest, and Peter an exorcist. Their martyrdom in the year 304 under the Emperor Diocletian prompted a profound reaction, and their burial sites were eventually the foundation for basilicas built in their names, a testament to so many other martyrs of the early Church. *Today's Readings: Acts 25:13b-21; Psalm 103:1-2, 11-12, 19-20ab; John 21:15-19.*

Saturday, June 3 St. Charles Lwanga and Companions

Charles Lwanga and twenty-one other Ugandan Christians were martyred between 1885 and 1887 by the brutal dictator Mwanga. Some of the martyrs had been baptized, but many were still catechumens. All were marched to their death, tortured along the way, and forced to witness each other's brutal deaths. Their witness is a reminder that, in every age, people struggle to keep the faith alive. *Today's Readings: Acts 28:16-20, 30-31; Psalm 11:4, 5 and 7; John 21:20-25.*

