

WSC REFLECTION GUIDE

Readings: Acts 1:1-11 Psalm 47:2-3, 6-9 Ephesians 1:17-23 Luke 24:46-53	Ascension of the Lord May 16, 2010
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Word: Disciples of Christ have love for one another.

Theme: We are disciples of Christ when we witness His forgiving love.
[Witnessing]

Promise: *“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem.”* (Acts 1:8)

Reflection:

What does the ascension of Lord Jesus mean to us? The Solemnity the Ascension of the Lord reminds us of our own end, our final destination. This is the glory of God and also our glory. The life of Jesus here on earth and his teachings are the road map to heaven. The Feast of the Ascension marks the departure of the Risen Christ's visible presence on earth. For 40 days after His resurrection, the Risen Lord walked among His people before being raised to heaven - the completion of God's plan, as foretold by the prophets. It signals the end of Jesus' earthy passion, life, and ministry. The event completes our understanding of the awesomeness of His glorious resurrection. The days of His teachings and appearances to many of His followers (Acts 1:3) have come to an end. As scripture tells us, His ascension affirms Jesus as the Messiah, "He was carried up into Heaven," (Lk. 24:51).

Just as the resurrection was the turning point of salvation history so is the ascension the turning point that marks the beginning of the Kingdom of God. The Lord's ascension is the climax to the gospel of Luke. It is also the prologue to the Acts of the Apostles.

The Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord implies that our hope does not consist merely of dwelling in this world, but rather in Heaven. God truly wants to share His happiness with all men. Christ indeed is our bridge to heaven. This scripture passage tells us of the homecoming of Jesus to heaven, where He dwells in the company of God Most High, beyond the boundaries of death and decay, the same home which we are invited to share because Christ has brought our human nature there with him, where He now waits to welcome us. Hence, we should prepare for our pilgrimage. He says: ***“In my Father's house there are many dwelling places,”*** and for him as for us, there really is no place like home.

By virtue of our calling as Christians, we are destined to be an optimistic people, full of hope and of deep-rooted confidence in our future. For where Christ has gone, we hope to follow, once our earthly journey is over. This is the joyful hope we have as the safe and sure anchor for our lives.

Jesus' final words to His apostles were brief and to the point. ***"I am with you always. Go, teach all nations."*** No longer confined to a bodily presence, He will be with His disciples in a new way, through the power of the Spirit. With His earthly mission over, He sends His disciples and those who believe in Him, to continue the work He began. Their task is to fan out from Jerusalem, 'to the ends of the earth', to proclaim the salvation He has won to all nations. Like the first disciples, we are called to follow Christ and proclaim His message to all. The best place to start is by putting our own lives in good spiritual order that we may truly be ***"His witnesses to the ends of the earth, and to preach the forgiveness of sins in His name,"*** (v 47). But before sending them on their way, He ensures that they will have the power to carry on their mission. He will send them ***"the Holy Spirit who will teach them all things and clothe them with power on high."*** (v49)

Christ's ascension reveals the work we must do in order to be with Christ forever. Our way to glory is none other than to witness to the Lord by taking up our own cross and following in His footsteps. What else does God ask of us? God gives us the mission to preach the gospel using the gifts and talents He has given us, the time He gives us, and ultimately, the very life He has given us. He gives us the opportunity to help save others for whom He paid so dearly. So let us clearly see where we are heading and who awaits us at the end of our journey. Let us not waste time, let us have a sense of direction and purpose, eager to encounter the Lord in heaven.

The ascension has tremendous implication on the life of the faithful. As disciples in Community, we should allow the in-dwelling Holy Spirit to clothe us with His power, so that we can effectively witness to God's message. When challenged, we should be able to face it with determination and sincerity. When burdened, we should strive to resolve it with truth and be ready to give and to receive fraternal correction. We have the responsibility to alleviate the sufferings around us, and do our bit in helping to free the world of everything that keeps human beings from reaching their highest potential. We should allow ourselves to be witnesses of God's forgiving love. After all, the Lord remains present to us and in us through the in-dwelling Holy Spirit.

The good news of Christ's ascension is that it defies death and promises a new life. As today's reading tells us, we are not to stand there gazing up to heaven awaiting Jesus' return. Instead, we are to preach repentance and forgiveness of sins, to restore men and women from a life of isolation and indifference to that of rebirth in Christ. That is our work today. We should not be speculating on Jesus' return, but give witnesses and accomplish the work the ascended Jesus has entrusted to us.

Christian witnessing is an occasion for purification and rebirth. It is a marvelous opportunity to continue to discover the newness of God's presence in our lives, that we may indeed be transformed into new people with new hearts and spirit. So let us put our trust in the Lord, confident of His presence in the power of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, God is good.

Prayer

God our Father, You have given us your Son Jesus to be our guide in our earthly pilgrimage. Through the power of the Holy Spirit grant us inner strength and inspire us to carry out the work and follow closely the path your Son has traced for us, so that one day we may join him in Your Kingdom. Amen.

Suggested Personal Reflection:

1. Does the ascension of Jesus our Lord make any difference in your witnessing to others?
2. How can I, as a disciple of Christ, witness His forgiving love to my brothers and sisters in and out of Community?
3. How do I participate in the Community's and Church's continuing mission of Evangelization?

Next Week's Daily Mass Reading Guide:

May 17, 2010 (Mon):	Acts 19:1-8; Ps 68:2-7; Jn 16:29-33
May 18, 2010 (Tue):	Acts 20:17-27; Ps 68:10-11, 20-21; Jn 17:1-11
May 19, 2010 (Wed):	Acts 20:28-38; Ps 68:29-30, 33-36; Jn 17:11-19
May 20, 2010 (Thur):	Acts 22:30, 23:6-11; Ps 16:1-2, 5, 7-11; Jn 17:20-26
May 21, 2010 (Fri):	Acts 25:13-21; Ps 103:1-2, 11-12, 19-20; Jn 21:15-19
May 22, 2010 (Sat):	Acts 28:16-20, 30-31; Ps 11:4-5, 7; Jn 21:20-25

“Ignorance of the Bible is ignorance of Christ. Read your Bible daily!”