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May 29, 2022 | The Ascension of the Lord

Acts 1:1-11 | Eph 1:17-23 or Heb 9:24-28; 10:19-23 | Lk 24:46-53

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

GROW AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

“Praise Jesus.” Those two words pack a powerful punch. We often say them with relief on hearing news of a better-than-expected prognosis, celebrating a milestone, seeing a beautiful sunset, or other moments when we feel God’s presence. Jesus’ ascension to the Father was clearly one of those moments. After Jesus was taken up into heaven, the Apostles “returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and they were continually in the temple praising God.” We might wonder how they could do that, after watching Jesus depart. I think the answer is found in Paul’s Letter to the Ephesians. The Apostles had what Paul desired for the people of Ephesus, and for all people: “a Spirit of wisdom and revelation resulting in knowledge of [Christ]”; enlightened hearts that know “the hope that belongs to his call” for all who believe. The Lord has brought us salvation: “Sing praise to God, sing praise; sing praise to our king, sing praise.”

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

Jesus said, “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” The Apostles took Jesus’ words to heart, and we must too. In a homily in 2013, Pope Francis said: “The Ascension does not point to Jesus’ absence, but tells us that he is alive in our midst in a new way. He is no longer in a specific place in the world as he was before the Ascension. He is now in the lordship of God, present in every space and time, close to each one of us.” As the two men clothed in white reminded the Apostles, Jesus will return. And we know that he is not distant, but that he is fully present to us in a new way. His presence is felt through the workings of the Holy Spirit in our lives and in the sacraments.

GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT Remember confirmation? A refresher on the gifts of the Spirit can serve as inspiration when we have a big decision to make or need guidance in our everyday lives: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety and fear of the Lord.