



Invest time each week to expand your vocabulary and deepen your faith.

05 May 2024

WORD OF THE WEEK

Ascension *\ə-,sen(t)- shən*

The act of **ascending**, or rising upward. The final earthly manifestation of the Risen Lord after the Resurrection. Jesus is lifted up and taken from view, transferred to the realm of the divine.

Pronunciation: <https://tinyurl.com/Take5-ascension>

CONTEXT

In the Scriptures, many ancient holy figures were said to be taken up to heaven, especially Enoch and Elijah.... Thus, **ascension** to the heavens came to be expected of holy and great persons; it indicated divine approval of them as well as their accession to heavenly power.

—Father Jerome Neyrey, S.J.

The **ascended** Christ, far from being absent, fills the whole cosmos in a new way.

—Sister Brid Long, S.S.L.

His **ascension** is our glory and our hope.

—Saint Augustine

WHY IT MATTERS

The **Ascension** establishes the christ’s universal rule and the church as the visible Body of Christ, equipped with the power and courage for mission. It assures us of our destiny to be with Christ now and on the last day. As Saint Augustine says, “While in heaven, he is also with us; and while on earth, we are with him.”

From the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 667): Jesus Christ, having entered the sanctuary of heaven once and for all, intercedes constantly for us as the mediator who assures us of the permanent outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

RELATED WORDS

Assumption | Resurrection | Pentecost | Epiphany

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

What is Christ’s Ascension?

Ascension seems like a feast designed to resolve a mystery: after Easter, where did Jesus go? Answer: back to his Father. Yet **Ascension** stories don’t exactly provide a snapshot of Jesus leaving town. Luke says Jesus was removed to heaven from Bethany on the day of his Resurrection. Acts of the Apostles reports this event 40 days later, from the Mount of Olives. Mark agrees that it happened on Easter—but while Jesus was at table with his disciples. Houston, we have a problem.

Or maybe not. Saint John Chrysostom insisted **Ascension** simply conveys the final exaltation of Christ after the humiliation of the cross. Saint Augustine viewed the **Ascension** as the glorification of us all: where Jesus went, we too might go. Theologians distinguish between “passive” assumptions and the active **Ascension** of Jesus. Another unique element of the **Ascension** is that while Jesus is physically gone, he remains present in a new way. The church becomes the visible Body of Christ on Earth, bearing his Spirit and sharing his Eucharist. In short, Jesus lifts up the church to where he is.

—Alice Camille, from Questions Catholics Ask <http://tinyurl.com/QCA-ascension>

REFLECTION OF THE WEEK

SOLEMNITY OF THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD (MAY 12)

Unlimited energy supply

All is not lost when Jesus leaves the disciples. In fact, nothing is lost because his Spirit remains—his essence, his energy, the fullness of his love for God and for us. Jesus is with us always through the power of the Holy Spirit. Each day, in every moment no matter what the circumstance, that power is yours to draw on. You are never alone. Nothing can separate you from the love—or the power—of God.

READINGS: Acts 1:1-11; Ephesians 1:17-23; Mark 16:15-20 (58 <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/051224-Ascension.cfm>). “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you.”

FAITH IN ACTION

Don’t waste energy trying to go it alone. Draw on God’s power—it’s free and totally renewable.