

- Happy Mothers Day
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 - *“So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God.”*
 - Mark gives us this lesser-remembered and briefer account of Jesus ascending; the account in our first reading from the Acts of the Apostles is much more descriptive and better known.
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 - The Ascension is, of course, an essential tenet of our Catholic faith, immortalized in the Apostles’ Creed, and in the Nicene Creed we recite at every Sunday Mass: *“He ascended into Heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.”*
 - And like any historical event, we rely upon witnesses’ accounts... and the witnesses to Jesus’ Ascension—the apostles—we trust because of their absolute dedication to spreading the truth of Christ after the Ascension and Pentecost...even though that mission eventually would lead to what otherwise would be inglorious and futile martyrdoms.
 - What more need they have done...what more could they have done...to convince the world of the truth of their witness?
 - After all, as Jesus says: there is no greater love than to give one’s own life for another.
 - Well, the apostles gave their lives for Him and for His will...and, by extension, gave their lives for us as well. For Him, the head... and for us, the body of Christ.
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- Now when the apostles witnessed Jesus “rising to Heaven”, it truly was a physically-observable manifestation which, of course, alluded to an infinitely greater reality.

- Because Heaven is not a material entity located on a cloud, like Lando Calrissian's city in "The Empire Strikes Back" ...else Yuri Gagarin's purported (but disputed) *statement* "I see no God up here" when he orbited the earth might have validity.
- What Heaven actually is, is beyond our ability to comprehend, but certainly it is not a material place as we understand materiality... else God Himself would be material, which is self-contradictory as He is the Creator of all materiality.
- Thus, we simply defer in faith to St. Paul who, echoing the prophet Isaiah, writes: "*What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him...*" (1 Corinthians 2:9)

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- Is it any wonder, then, that Christ's glorified body after His resurrection had new properties—moving through locked doors, vanishing from sight at will, etc.?
 - Yet His true glory—which the apostles merely glimpsed at the Transfiguration—remained veiled under the appearance of ordinary humanity... much as His humanity and divinity even now remain veiled under the appearance of ordinary bread and wine in the Eucharist.
 - He walked, talked and even ate with the apostles at various times after His resurrection until, as the Catechism puts it, "*...the irreversible entry of His humanity into divine glory, symbolized by the cloud and by Heaven*"—the Ascension.
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 - The Catechism uses that word "irreversible", I think, because in scripture we can actually read of two "ascensions". Both Mark and Luke's Gospels record Him rising on Easter Sunday, but the Acts of the Apostles forty days later. Whether those are actually one

and the same is disputed, but neither is, of course, beyond God's ability. Remembering that Luke wrote both his Gospel and Acts, it is certainly possible there was at least one interim, and then a final, Ascension.

- “Irreversible” might not be the best translation of the Latin document the Catechism cites because that implies “an inability to reverse”, which is not the case with God. “Final” or “ultimate” may be a better term. That is what we celebrate as THE Ascension.

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- Jesus foretold of this Ascension many times, and told Mary Magdalene explicitly after His resurrection: *“I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brethren and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.”* (John 20:17)...
 - ...and prior to His Passion: *“No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of man.”* (John 3:13)

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- By the Ascension Jesus takes humanity—of which we all participate—into divine glory...and thus we all are, as Archbishop Sheen says, in a way potentially, but not yet actually, in Heaven. The body is called to join its head in eternal life.
 - And thus, Jesus—in His desire for us to be with Him—is our intercessor with the Father by His ever-present to the Father sacrifice on the cross. “Look, my Father, and see how much I have loved them.”
 - And Jesus, the priest of the new and eternal Covenant, *“...entered, not into a sanctuary made by human hands...but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.”* (Hebrews 9:24)...permanently exercising His eternal priesthood “to make

intercession” for “*those who draw near to God through him.*” (CCC 664) But it is that drawing near through Him which is essential by our love of God, love of neighbor.

- Why did Jesus ascend to Heaven and not stay with us bodily?
 - He tells the apostles: “*I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you... When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth...* (John 16:7-13)
 - That is what we will celebrate next weekend—the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost—the Holy Spirit being the ever-present, omni-locational teacher of the Church.
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- As the Resurrection gives us faith, the Ascension gives us hope and longing, as we remember Jesus’ words to us: “*...I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you also may be.*” (John 14:3)
- This is the hope which we, His disciples, are sent to proclaim to the world...a hope which attains its fulfillment by fidelity to Him.

Reading 1[Acts 1:1-11](#)

In the first book, Theophilus,
I dealt with all that Jesus did and taught
until the day he was taken up,
after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit
to the apostles whom he had chosen.
He presented himself alive to them
by many proofs after he had suffered,
appearing to them during forty days
and speaking about the kingdom of God.
While meeting with the them,
he enjoined them not to depart from Jerusalem,
but to wait for “the promise of the Father
about which you have heard me speak;
for John baptized with water,
but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

When they had gathered together they asked him,
“Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”
He answered them, “It is not for you to know the times or seasons
that the Father has established by his own authority.
But 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.”

When he had said this, as they were looking on,
he was lifted up, and a cloud took him from their sight.

While they were looking intently at the sky as he was going,
suddenly two men dressed in white garments stood beside them.

They said, “Men of Galilee,
why are you standing there looking at the sky?

This Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven will return in the same way as you have seen him
going into heaven.”

[Ps 47:2-3, 6-7, 8-9](#)**Responsorial Psalm**

R. (6) God mounts his throne to shouts of joy: a blare of trumpets for the Lord.

or:

R. **Alleluia.**

All you peoples, clap your hands,
shout to God with cries of gladness,
For the LORD, the Most High, the awesome,
is the great king over all the earth.

R. **God mounts his throne to shouts of joy: a blare of trumpets for the Lord.**

or:

R. **Alleluia.**

God mounts his throne amid shouts of joy;
the LORD, amid trumpet blasts.
Sing praise to God, sing praise;
sing praise to our king, sing praise.

R. **God mounts his throne to shouts of joy: a blare of trumpets for the Lord.**

or:

R. **Alleluia.**

For king of all the earth is God;
sing hymns of praise.
God reigns over the nations,
God sits upon his holy throne.

R. **God mounts his throne to shouts of joy: a blare of trumpets for the Lord.**

or:

R. **Alleluia.**

[Eph 1:17-23](#)

Reading II

Brothers and sisters:

May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory,
give you a Spirit of wisdom and revelation
resulting in knowledge of him.

May the eyes of your hearts be enlightened,
that you may know what is the hope that belongs to his call,
what are the riches of glory
in his inheritance among the holy ones,
and what is the surpassing greatness of his power
for us who believe,
in accord with the exercise of his great might,
which he worked in Christ,

raising him from the dead

and seating him at his right hand in the heavens,

far above every principality, authority, power, and dominion,

and every name that is named
not only in this age but also in the one to come.
And he put all things beneath his feet
and gave him as head over all things to the church,
which is his body,
the fullness of the one who fills all things in every way.

Gospel

[Mk 16:15-20](#)

Jesus said to his disciples:
“Go into the whole world
and proclaim the gospel to every creature.
Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved;
whoever does not believe will be condemned.
These signs will accompany those who believe:
in my name they will drive out demons,
they will speak new languages.
They will pick up serpents with their hands,
and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not harm them.
They will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

**So then the Lord Jesus, after he spoke to them,
was taken up into heaven
and took his seat at the right hand of God.**

But they went forth and preached everywhere,
while the Lord worked with them
and confirmed the word through accompanying signs.