

THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD – YEAR A – 23/24 MAY 2020



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For those wishing to contribute to Stewardship or Priests' collection, the Parish account details are listed below for electronic funds transfer.

1st Collection

Account name: St Bede's Presbytery Account Presbytery

Account BSB: 083 347 Account no. 666017079

2nd Collection

Account name: St Bede's Church Account Church

Account BSB: 083 347 Account no. 458706734

Please click on the link below after 5pm on Saturday, 23rd May, to watch the Ascension of the Lord, Online Mass, celebrated by our priests: <https://youtu.be/XblTvl-h7Ug>



First reading

Acts 1:1-11

Jesus was lifted up while they looked on

In my earlier work, Theophilus, I dealt with everything Jesus had done and taught from the beginning until the day he gave his instructions to the apostles he had chosen through the Holy Spirit, and was taken up to heaven. He had shown himself alive to them after his Passion by many demonstrations: for forty days he had continued to appear to them and tell them about the kingdom of God. When he had been at table with them, he had told them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for what the Father had promised. 'It is' he had said 'what you have heard me speak about: John baptised with water but you, not many days from now, will be baptised with the Holy Spirit.'

Now having met together, they asked him, 'Lord, has the time come? Are you going to restore the kingdom to Israel?' He replied, 'It is not for you to know times or dates that the Father has decided by his own authority, but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and then you will be my witnesses not only in Jerusalem but throughout Judaea and Samaria, and indeed to the ends of the earth.'

As he said this he was lifted up while they looked on, and a cloud took him from their sight. They were still staring into the sky when suddenly two men in white were standing near them and they said,

‘Why are you men from Galilee standing here looking into the sky? Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven, this same Jesus will come back in the same way as you have seen him go there.’

The word of the Lord.

Responsorial Psalm:

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

1/ All people clap your hands,
Cry to God with shouts of joy!
For the Lord, the Most High, we must fear,
Great king over all the earth.

2/ God goes up with shouts of joy,
The Lord goes up with trumpet blast.
Sing praise for God, sing praise,
Sing praise to our king, sing praise.

3/ God is king of all the earth.
Sing praise with all your skills.
God is king over the nations,
God reigns on his holy name.



Second reading

Ephesians 1:17-23

God made him sit at his right hand in heaven

May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give you a spirit of wisdom and perception of what is revealed, to bring you to full knowledge of him. May he enlighten the eyes of your mind so that you can see what hope his call holds for you, what rich glories he has promised the saints will inherit and how infinitely great is the power that he has exercised for us believers. This you can tell from the strength of his power at work in Christ, when he used it to raise him from the dead and to make him sit at his right hand, in heaven, far above every Sovereignty, Authority, Power, or Domination, or any other name that can be named not only in this age but also in the age to come. He has put all things under his feet and made him, as the ruler of everything, the head of the Church; which is his body, the fullness of him who fills the whole creation.

The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL

Matthew 28: 16-20

Go and make disciples of all nations

The eleven disciples set out for Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had arranged to meet them. When they saw him they fell down before him, though some hesitated. Jesus came up and spoke to them. He said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, make disciples of all the nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Today we are celebrating the Feast of the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ into Heaven. That is, He ascended into heaven and seated at the right hand of the Father.

After Jesus gathered His disciples in Galilee for the last time with His physical presence and instructed them on what to do.

His ascension was not just a farewell party for Him. Above all, it is the giving of an unfinished business, that is, His mission which He entrusts to His apostles and to us too. He expects us to continue this mission. What is this mission? This mission is not new to us. It has already existed for more than two thousand years. This mission is not only given to few people but to all of us. They are: to witness to Christ in the world, to preach the Good news and to show by our love that He is always with us. All in all, there are three types of mission.

First is to become witnesses, evangelizers and teachers to Christ in our homes, our workplaces, in our schools and in the whole world. How do we do this? Do we suddenly turn into religious fanatics and begin preaching to our families, our friend and those around us? Not at all! It is through our prayer and worship, loving concern and care for others or a good life. We do it simply by making an effort to become the kind of person Jesus teaches us to be. We witness to Jesus and teach others by our love when others need us, by our patience when others annoy us, by our forgiveness when others wrong us, and by our perseverance when we feel like quitting.

Second is to preach the good news that God redeemed us. But how can we preach to other people if we don't know what to preach?

We are living in a modern world. There is a greater possibility for us now to reach the ends of the earth, not by going there physically like the apostles and past missionaries had to do, but by using the communications media. Especially in this lockdown period, we can send an e-mail or a text message. We should use the television, computers, cellular phones, radio, newspapers and the internet especially social networking like Facebook, Twitter, Friendster, blogs, websites as tools for the kingdom of God. But oftentimes we allow these electronics communications to be used by our enemies to control us and distract us from our mission; we allow them to be used as weapons for evil. But this is not the case. Let us use these tools for the greater glory of is man's fully alive.

Third is to show by our love that he is always with us but how? We can do it though the testimony of our daily living. If you are a businessman, pay your employees with a just and honest payment. If we are working in public or private offices, do not accept any bribery or kickbacks when somebody is processing his/her papers in order to fulfill Christ's teaching of honesty.

And also we don't need to go to the four corners of the earth to be missionaries. As parents we are called to the same mission as the apostles. We are the first and most significant teachers of our children. We bring them to baptism and show them the Good News. Not only our actions speak to our children about what we believe and how we hope they live Christian lives, but our efforts to prepare them for the sacraments and come to the Lord's Table every week helps them know the full depth of our faith.

Let us pray that we can faithfully fulfil our mission in our daily live.



PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

With confidence we place our petitions before God who hears the prayers of our hearts.

1. For Pope Francis, and others with authority and responsibility in the church: that they may receive the graces necessary to fulfil their duties, helping the people of God to build the kingdom in our world.

Let us pray to the Lord.

2. For peoples throughout the world, especially those who do not know Christ: that they may find, through human solidarity, the face of Christ in their lives.

Let us pray to the Lord.

3. For the church both local and universal: that we may be a beacon of light and hope to those who live in the shadow of darkness and fear.

Let us pray to the Lord.

4. For government leaders: that they may be imbued with wisdom and the resolve to serve all people as they carry out their civic responsibilities.

Let us pray to the Lord.

5. For the sick, suffering, and those who are close to death: that they may have courage to accept God's will in their life.

Let us pray to the Lord.

6. For all who have died recently, especially **Elizabeth Kalunga, Catherine Zimmer and Fr Michael O'Dea**, and those whose anniversaries occur about this time, especially **Ove Rutstrom, Gordon Weir and Veronica Brady**, that they will find eternal life in the name of Jesus Christ.

Let us pray to the Lord.

Good, gracious, and holy God, as we celebrate your Son's return to your right hand, help us to do our share, as his contemporary disciples, to build the kingdom of God in our world. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Venerable Bede



The Venerable Bede was a British monk whose works in theology, history, chronology, poetry, and biography have led him to be accepted as the greatest scholar of the early medieval era. Born in March of 672 and **having died on May 25**, 735 in Jarrow, Northumbria, UK.

Childhood

Little is known of Bede's childhood, other than he was born in March of 672 to parents living on land belonging to the newly founded Monastery of St. Peter, based in Wearmouth, to which Bede was given by relatives for a monastic education when he was seven. Initially, in the care of Abbot Benedict, Bede's teaching was taken over by Ceolfrith, with whom Bede moved to the monastery's new twin-house at Jarrow in 681. The *Life of Ceolfrith* suggests that here only the young Bede and Ceolfrith survived a plague which devastated the settlement. However, in the aftermath of the plague the new house regrew and continued. Both houses were in the kingdom of Northumbria.

Adult Life

Bede spent the rest of his life as a monk at Jarrow, first being taught and then teaching to the daily rhythms of monastic rule: for Bede, a mixture of prayer and study. He was ordained as a Deacon aged 19 – at a time when Deacons were supposed to be 25 or over – and a priest aged 30. Indeed, historians believe Bede left Jarrow only twice in his relatively long life, to visit Lindisfarne and York. While his letters contain hints of other visits, there isn't any real evidence, and he certainly never travelled far.

Death and Reputation

Bede died in 735 and was buried at Jarrow before being re-interred inside Durham Cathedral. He was already renowned among his peers, being described by a Bishop Boniface as having "shone forth as a lantern in the world by his scriptural commentary", but is now regarded as the greatest and most multi-talented scholar of the early medieval era, perhaps of the entire medieval era. Bede was canonised in 1899, thus giving him the posthumous title of Saint Bede the Venerable. Bede was declared 'venerable' by the church in 1986, and the word is given on his tomb in Durham Cathedral: *Hic sunt in fossa bedae venerabilis ossa* (Here are buried the bones of the Venerable Bede.)