



# WEEKLY GOSPEL REFLECTION



The Ascension of the Lord, Cycle C

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*"Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures." Luke 24:47*

In Luke's Gospel of the Ascension, the focus is as a forward momentum, presented as the beginning of the Church's mission. Recalling that Luke and Acts were originally written as one corpus, this event signifies the closing of the account of Jesus' time on earth and anticipates the Apostolic Era to follow.

The Ascension of Christ is the bridge between his Father and the disciples. John's Gospel reads, *"I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God. (20:17)* Jesus *"opened their minds to understand the scriptures"* in the most powerful illumination in a Christian's life, followed by the act of commissioning to preach and witness with firsthand knowledge their encounter with the risen Christ. All these things are the result of prophesy. The disciples are living in an age of fulfillment, and are witnesses to what has happened. They are clothed with power from on high, with a mission to bring Christ to all nations. God's intention is for a universal mission.

As Christ leads them out in procession *"as far as Bethany,"* he concludes his life-long sacred liturgy. This is the only time in Luke that Jesus blesses people, as he closes the liturgy of his earthly life. And it is the only time in the Gospel that Luke shows us the disciples worshipping Jesus. The disciples are not saddened by his Ascension. Rather, they are impassioned by his instructions. Their passion becomes the propellant for their mission at the conclusion of this sacred liturgy.

This concluding portion of the Gospel matches its beginning. As the story began in Jerusalem and in the temple, so it ends with the disciples rejoicing in Jerusalem and continually praising God in the temple, to await the coming of the Holy Spirit. As illuminated believers, they now know God is the Ultimate Author of all that has happened.

As you reflect on this Gospel, anticipate the fullness of the Pentecost that is to come. Enter into the wonder and awe of contemplation, as you surround yourself with the inspiration of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Today, may Christ, in his Glorified Body, lead you out *"as far as Bethany,"* and, lifting up his hands, bless you as he ascends to the Father.

Contemplating on these mysteries, may Christ grant you the confidence in faith that there will be accomplished in the earthly Mystical Body of the Church what has already come to pass in Christ her Head.

**A reading from the holy gospel according to Luke.**

Jesus said to the disciples,

*"These are my words that I spoke to you  
while I was still with you -  
that everything written about me in the law of Moses,  
the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled."*

Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them,

*"Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer  
and to rise from the dead on the third day,  
and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name  
to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.  
You are witnesses of these things."*

*"And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised;  
so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."*

Then he led them out as far as Bethany,  
and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them.  
While he was blessing them,  
he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven.  
And they worshipped him,  
and returned to Jerusalem with great joy;  
and they were continually in the temple blessing God.

***The Gospel of the Lord***