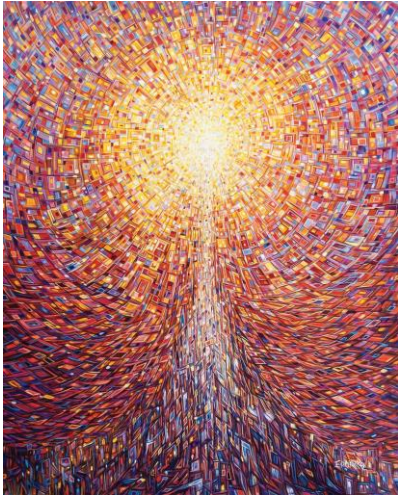


The Camel-Allen Churches

Prayer at home on Ascension Day



Thursday 21st May 2020

Alleluia. Christ is risen!

He is risen indeed.

Risen, ascended, glorified. Alleluia!

MEEKNESS AND MAJESTY,
Manhood and Deity,
In perfect harmony,
The Man who is God.
Lord of eternity
Dwells in humanity,
Kneels in humility
And washes our feet.

O what a mystery,
Meekness and majesty.
Bow down and worship
For this is your God,
This is your God.

Father's pure radiance,
Perfect in innocence,
Yet learns obedience
To death on a cross.
Suffering to give us life,
Conquering through sacrifice,
And as they crucify
Prays: 'Father forgive.'

Wisdom unsearchable,
God the invisible,
Love indestructible
In frailty appears.
Lord of infinity,
Stooping so tenderly,
Lifts our humanity
To the heights of His throne.

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For forty days we have been celebrating with joyful hearts the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, his bursting from the tomb and his defeat of the power of sin and death. He appeared to his

disciples many times and told them about the kingdom of God. Today we recall how he left this earth and returned to his Father, ascending into heaven to take his throne over all dominions and powers. Trusting in his reign over all creation and submitting to his kingly yet loving rule, let us hear again the story of his parting.

Acts 1.1-11

¹In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning ²until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. ³After his suffering he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over the course of forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. ⁴While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. 'This', he said, 'is what you have heard from me; ⁵for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.'

⁶ So when they had come together, they asked him, 'Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?' ⁷He replied, 'It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.' ⁹When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰While he was going and they were gazing up towards heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them.

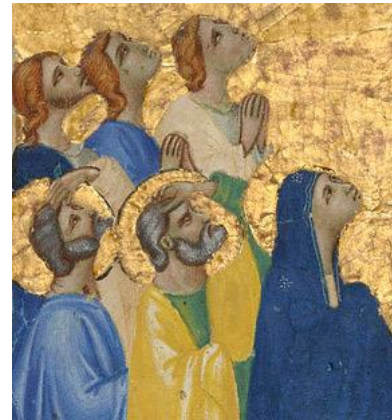
¹¹They said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up towards heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.'

The Collect for Ascension Day

Risen Christ,

You have raised our human nature to the throne of heaven:
help us to seek and serve you,
that we may join you at the Father's side,
where you reign with the Spirit in glory,
now and for ever. Amen

The Lord's Prayer: Our Father...



Gospel Reading Luke 24.44-53

⁴⁴ Then he said to them, '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.' ⁴⁵Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, ⁴⁶and he said to them, 'Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷and that

repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹And 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.'

⁵⁰ Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. ⁵¹While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. ⁵²And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; ⁵³and they were continually in the temple blessing God.

Reflection

One phrase struck me from our Gospel reading: the disciples *'returned to Jerusalem with great joy'*. We might have expected them to be sorrowful and disappointed, desperate even, but joyful? They had just got Jesus back from the dead and now he was leaving again? It must have been an emotional roller-coaster. So, what made the difference between overwhelming sorrow and great joy?

We sometimes have a Sunday School picture of Jesus' Ascension in our minds. But Luke is not really talking about Jesus being taken up to a heaven situated physically somewhere up above us, and the cloud is not a feature of our atmosphere, but signifies the presence of God (remember the pillar of cloud during the Exodus, that represented God's presence accompanying the people as they travelled from Egypt to the promise land) Heaven is not somewhere 'up' there but rather God's space, God's dimension. At the Ascension is Jesus entering into God's dimension to share his divine glory. Jesus, is vindicated, exalted to the right hand of the Father and *'Lifts our humanity to the heights of his throne'*.

The Ascension is a key piece of the jigsaw of understanding who Jesus is. It was the moment when the penny dropped and the disciples realised that Jesus was both Lord and King. Only God was to be worshipped and there could only be one God...so that made Jesus....? No wonder they *'worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy;'* Now they realised, now they knew that he was worthy of worship as Lord – the ramifications of the Trinity had yet to be worked out, as we are still working them out today, but they were filled with great joy, *'and they were continually in the temple blessing God.'*

We too come to worship Jesus, risen, ascended, glorified and realise again just who he is: Lord of all, Lord of my life and yours; forever present with God, praying for us.

Prayers

God of love, as we celebrate this festival of Jesus entry into heaven as Saviour and Lord, we pray for the unity of the Church, for strength, and renewed vision.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer**
Both heaven and earth **are full of your glory**

We pray for all separated from loved ones at this time, for all who long for reunion. We pray for those locked in together where relationships are strained or broken. For those who are anxious and afraid for loved ones at risk.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer**
Both heaven and earth **are full of your glory**

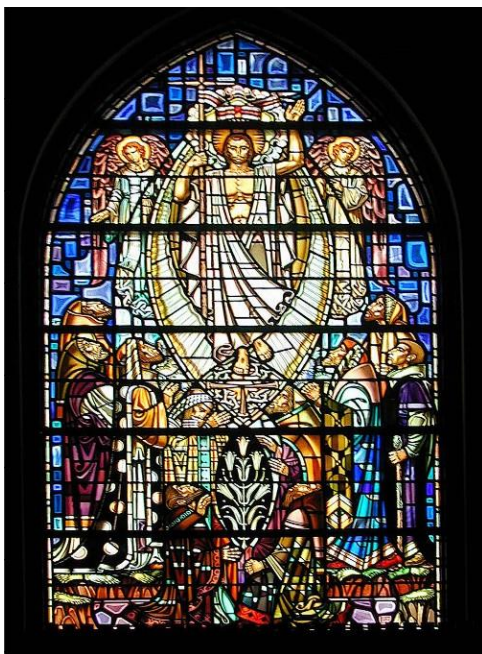
We pray for those who are full of tears and cannot imagine being happy again. For those who are hardened and callous, or hurt and hiding, whose inner hurts have never been healed. We pray for wholeness comfort and new life.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer**
Both heaven and earth **are full of your glory**

We pray for all those affected by Covid 19 and those working to care for them and combat it.
We commend to your eternal love, those who have died and all who miss their presence.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer**
Both heaven and earth **are full of your glory**

Help up to worship you as Lord of all and share your love with all
Both heaven and earth **are full of your glory**
Amen



Alleluia, sing to Jesus;
His the sceptre, His the throne.
Alleluia, his the triumph,
His the victory alone.
Hark! The songs of peaceful Zion
thunder like a mighty flood;
Jesus out of ev'ry nation
hath redeemed us by his blood.

Alleluia, not as orphans
are we left in sorrow now.
Alleluia, he is near us;
faith believes, nor questions how.
Though the cloud from sight received him
when the forty days were o'er,
shall our hearts forget His promise,
"I am with you evermore"?

Alleluia, bread of heaven,
thou on earth our food, our stay.
Alleluia, here the sinful
flee to thee from day to day.
Intercessor, friend of sinners,
earth's Redeemer, plead for me,
where the songs of all the sinless
sweep across the crystal sea.

Alleluia, King eternal,
thee the Lord of lords we own;
Alleluia, born of Mary,
earth thy footstool, heaven thy throne
thou within the veil hast entered
robed in flesh our great High Priest;
thou on earth both priest and victim
in the Eucharistic Feast.

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Blessing

God the Father;
who has given to his Son the name above every name,
strengthen us to proclaim Christ Jesus as Lord. **Amen**

God the Son,
who is our great high priest passed into the heavens,
plead for us at the right hand of the Father. **Amen**

God the Holy Spirit,
who pours out his abundant gifts upon the Church,
make us faithful servants of Christ our King. **Amen**

And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among us and remain with us always. **Amen**

*with material from Common Worship Times and Seasons © 2000 The Archbishop's Council
Prayers adapted from Susan Sayers. Compiled and written by The Revd Angela Cooper*