



Sunday 29th May 2025

Ascension Day

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.' ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, ⁴⁶ 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, ⁴⁷ and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹ 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.'

The Ascension of Jesus

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

Other Readings: Acts 1.1-11 or Daniel 7.9-14

Psalm 47 or Psalm 93

Ephesians 1.15-23 or Acts 1.1-11

Homily

A Story in Two Settings

There are two kinds of books in the world. The first is one in whose story you desire to join as you read along. The other kind is where you do not know what to make of the story as you move through the chapters, but when you come to the end, it all makes sense in a different way and at that point you close the book in a satisfying 'aha' moment knowing it has made an impact on you in some way.

When it comes to Christian discipleship and the book at the heart of who we are and strive to become, the Bible, we can suffer something of a lack of enthusiasm which perhaps stems from our not being able to make the connection between the lives we live and these stories we read in Scripture that were written thousands of years ago. Sometimes the 'aha' moments are less easy to identify making them less impactful because we, like the first disciples, don't quite *get it*.

However, maybe the way the Gospel of Luke ends falls into that 'aha' category. You may not be sure about your place in the story as it unfolds chapter by chapter, but you want to join in the end, and somehow, you *know* it matters to you. The life and death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus matters.

At the cross of Jesus, the people who welcomed him to Jerusalem with great excitement were nowhere to be found. So much for their faithful promises to him. At the tomb, no one was waiting for him to come out victoriously. So much for their attentive listening. But now Jesus has come back to life, trampling death through His death, and conquering death by his resurrection. Now the disciples have their King back, it is time to restore the Kingdom of God against the Romans. But not so fast. The forty days Jesus spends with his followers is a crash course on the Old Testament and his life. Whatever the disciples got wrong about him during his life is behind them as Jesus now opens their minds to understand that the whole story, beginning from the Garden of Eden until now, was about God coming in flesh to defeat our greatest enemy: death.

The natural expectation would be that this Messiah would slowly show himself to everyone in the world, bringing shame to those who wrongly executed him. But that is not what happens. Jesus leaves his people behind and is taken up to heaven. But this time, unlike the times when the disciples were sad and confused when Jesus spoke of his crucifixion, they are filled with joy and are continually in the temple blessing God; and that joy and excitement to continually bless God that was with them could and should be within us too. This is not a thing that happened once and for all in the past. We modern day disciples are inspired by the story of the disciples of whom we read, and by Jesus' story, and we too continually worship and praise our God. What we do today and who we are today is made possible because Jesus has been taken up to the right hand of God to rule; and he appoints you, the person sitting next to you, and those whom we might feel are not at all equipped for whatever reason, to be His ambassadors.

As proof of this, pay attention to how our story is made real in our liturgy every Sunday, particularly towards the end. The priest goes to the altar, not as a private individual, but in the person of Christ, to raise his or her hands to give the final blessing, (Luke 24:50), and ends the service by saying either "Go forth, the Mass is ended" or "Go, in the peace of Christ". This is our Ascension moment. This is our weekly commissioning to follow our baptismal vocation, our God-given vocation. The word Mass comes from the Latin dismissal words at the end of the service, "Ite missa est" which means "Go forth, it is sent". What this means for us is that *every* Sunday in a Eucharist service, we re-enact the story of the Gospels and we end our service the way the Luke ends his gospel.

Going to church is not a ritualistic or even a religious act alone, it is a whole way of living and embedding ourselves in a real story. When we come to the end of a Eucharistic service, that is not where it ends, but where it starts afresh. The story has made an impact on us and it is now our time to go out into the world, knowing that Jesus has been praying for us, enabling us, and cheering us from the right hand of the Father, to share what we know of Him and the joy he brings to our lives. Amen.

Conversation Questions

1. What passages of Scripture confuse you? Do you know where to find material that will help you understand the Bible? Did you know about our Digital Learning Platform which is free to use and is designed to help everyone take their next step in the journey of faith. Take a look using this link: [Sign Up To Our New Digital Learning Platform - Lincoln Diocese](#)

We also have resources and a library at Edward King House with books to help you unpack what the stories in scripture mean, who wrote them, in what context, and how they speak to us as we live out our lives in Lincolnshire in the 21st century? If you want to know more, contact Alice Maikuma in the College of St Hugh.

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2. God has called you by name to continue the work of Jesus as a modern day disciple. Do you think about what your baptismal vocation might be? What it is that God is asking you to be and do for him? If you would like to know more about what God is asking of your life, do you know who to speak with? Have a chat with a member of the ministry team within your church.
3. Is there anything else from the passage not already discussed that speaks to you? What is it?
4. What will you do this week in your Monday-to-Saturday ministry in response to what you have heard today? #everydayfaith

Prayer

Spend some time in prayer, responding to what you have heard today and listening to what God might be saying to you.

Collect of the day

*Grant, we pray, almighty God,
that as we believe your only-begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ
to have ascended into the heavens,
so we in heart and mind may also ascend
and with him continually dwell;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.*

(or)

*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.*

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