

# Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the OCIA  
The Ascension of the Lord • Year C • May 29 or June 1, 2025

*Almighty God,  
you free us from  
the eternal death of sin.  
When our time  
on earth concludes,  
may we follow  
where your Son leads  
and be taken up  
into heavenly heights.  
Amen.*



## Sunday Word

Acts 1:1-11

Psalms 47:2-3, 6-7, 8-9

Ephesians 1:17-23 or Hebrews 9:24-28; 10:19-23

Luke 24:46-53

### Lifted Up by Promise

For forty days, the Risen Lord appears to the disciples. He lifts up the hearts of his chosen ones, promising them the power of the Holy Spirit. In the realization of that promise, they become his witnesses to the ends of the earth.

### Enlightened Hope

Our calling is to an eternal hope, the inheritance of the holy ones. Fullness of life fills those who are members of Christ's Body, the Church. Confident, we enter the sanctuary, for the veil between Heaven and earth has been removed by the loving sacrifice of Jesus.

### Blessing and Praise

The Risen Lord blesses the disciples before he ascends to Heaven. They worship and praise him as we do today.

## Catholic Teaching: The Ascension of the Lord

Our belief in the Ascension is professed in both the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. At first glance, the belief in the Ascension could appear as nothing more than a historical remembrance of Jesus' final departure from this earthly existence. As such, its relevance to our lives might seem marginal at best.

Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, the Ascension is a crucial dimension of the saving plan of God, which we refer to as the Paschal Mystery. The Ascension expresses our conviction that Christ's Death and Resurrection have saving ramifications for us. Moreover, it explains how it is that we can and must experience Christ's presence to and in the Church in a totally new way in the post-Resurrection era.

The Ascension encapsulates hope. The Ascension of Christ signals the way his followers hope to go. Where the glorious Head has

gone before us, the Body is called to follow in hope. In that blessed hope, our stance is to exult in the Beloved, the one who makes possible our elevation.

Where Christ has gone, we hope to follow. Left to our own devices, we would not have access to the Father's house in Heaven—that is, to God's life and happiness. Only Christ can open it to us. The Lord, our Head and Source, precedes us. We are confident that we will be drawn up into the heavenly home. Meanwhile, as we await this blessed destination, the Church is empowered to act in this world. Christ intercedes constantly on behalf of his members as the mediator who assures us of the permanent outpouring of the Holy Spirit and as the one who sits at the right hand of God the Father.

### *Distinctiveness of Church Teaching*

For forty days after his Resurrection, Christ ate and drank with his disciples and continued to teach them about the Kingdom of God. During that time, his glory remained veiled. It remained under the appearance of an ordinary humanity.

This final stage of forty days prior to the Ascension holds a vital and beautiful significance in the story of Salvation as it relates closely to another central mystery of Christ: the descent from Heaven in the Incarnation. Seen from this perspective, this last stage of preparation for the Ascension functions as a type of balance in the Salvation story. As Jesus himself teaches, only the one who came from the Father can return to the Father (see John 16:28). It is only in Christ, the one who unites Heaven with earth in his Paschal Mystery, that believers can find passage from earth to Heaven. For his followers, the Lord Jesus makes that passage a blessed reality.



## **Key Terms**

### **ASCENSION**

Term that expresses the entrance of Jesus' humanity into divine glory in Heaven, taking place forty days after his Resurrection from the dead (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 659).

### **INCARNATION**

Term that expresses the fact that the Son of God assumed our human nature and became man so that our Salvation would be accomplished in that same human nature. In professing the Incarnation, we hold that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Second Person of the Trinity, is both true God and true man, not partially God and partially man (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 461).

### **APOSTLES' CREED**

Succinct statement of Christian faith so named because it is considered by the Church as an accurate summary of the Apostles' faith (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 194).

## **Voices of Faith**

Why do we on earth not strive to find rest with him in heaven even now, through the faith, hope and love that unites us to him? While in heaven he is also with us; and we while on earth are with him. He is here with us by his divinity, his power and his love. We cannot be in heaven, as he is on earth, by divinity, but in him, we can be there by love.

—Saint Augustine

It was certainly a great and indescribable source of joy when, in the sight of the heavenly multitudes, the nature of our human race ascended over the dignity of all heavenly creatures. It passed the angelic orders and was raised beyond the heights of the archangels. In its ascension, our human race did not stop at any other height until this same nature was received at the seat of the eternal Father. Our human nature, united with the divinity of the Son, was on the throne of his glory. The ascension of Christ is our elevation.

—Pope Saint Leo the Great

## **Further Reading**

***Catechism of the Catholic Church***: 659 (final apparition of Risen Lord), 661 (consequences of the Ascension), 663 (seated at God's right hand)

***United States Catholic Catechism for Adults***: Chapter 8 (The Saving Death and Resurrection of Christ), especially the section entitled "The Ascension into Heaven," pages 96–97

***Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church***: 132 (meaning of the Ascension), 222 (Paschal Mystery made present in the Church's liturgy)