

# Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA  
The Ascension of the Lord • Year B • May 12, 2024



*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 the heavenly heights.*

## Sunday Word

Acts 1:1-11

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

Ephesians 1:17-23 or Eph. 4:1-13 or 4:1-7, 11-13

Mark 16:15-20

### *Uplifted by Promise*

For forty days, the Risen Lord appears to the disciples. He lifts up the hearts of his chosen ones, promising to send the power of the Holy Spirit upon them.

### *Enlightened by 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.

### *Sent by Jesus' Command*

The Risen Lord commands the disciples to go throughout the world and proclaim the Good News. Those whom they baptize will inherit Salvation.

## Catholic Doctrine: The Ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ

### *We Hope to Follow*

Our belief in the Ascension is professed in both the Apostles' Creed and in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. At first glance, this 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.

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.

Basically, the Ascension encapsulates hope. Where the glorious Head has gone before us, the Body, the Church, is called to

follow in hope. In that blessed hope, we exalt in the Beloved, the One who makes possible our elevation.

### ***Access to Heaven***

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 such that we, his members, have entrance. The Lord, our Head and Source, precedes us. We are confident that we will be drawn up into the heavenly sanctuary, our true home. Meanwhile, as we await this blessed destination, the Church is empowered to act in this world, for Christ intercedes constantly on behalf of his members. He alone is the mediator between us and God the Father, the One who assures us of the permanent outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

### ***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. He appears to them bodily, and yet this body of his has been transformed by the Resurrection, radiating glory. From this perspective, his glorified body during these forty days functions as a type of “balance” in the Salvation story. Only in Christ—the One who unites Heaven with earth in his Paschal Mystery—can believers find passage from earth to Heaven. Just as his descent from Heaven makes possible our Salvation, so does his Ascension to the right hand of the Father make possible our spirited hope as we make new disciples and apply ourselves to the task of the kingdom.

## **Key Terms**

### **ASCENSION**

Term that expresses the entrance of Jesus' humanity into divine glory in Heaven (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 659).

### **GLORIFIED BODY**

Term that expresses how the very real body of the resurrected Christ was not ghostlike but authentically human and simultaneously possessing new, unique properties not limited to time and space (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 645).

### **APOSTLES' CREED**

Succinct, accurate summary of the Apostles' faith; earliest baptismal creed of the Church of Rome, the seat of Peter as its first bishop and leader of the Apostles (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 194).

## **Voices of Faith**

[Christ] 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 of Hippo

The human being finds room in God; through Christ, the human being was introduced into the very life of God. And since God embraces and sustains the entire cosmos, the Ascension of the Lord means that Christ has not departed from us, but that he is now, thanks to his being with the Father, close to each one of us for ever. Each one of us can be on intimate terms with him; each can call upon him. The Lord is always within hearing.

— Pope Benedict XVI

## **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)

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