



SUNDAY, MAY 28, 2017

**SOLEMNITY OF THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD
What goes up also comes down**

Whether your church community celebrates the Ascension of Jesus today or did so last Thursday, it's tempting to think of only half of the meaning of the event, the part about Jesus being exalted to God's right hand where he exercises dominion over everything in heaven and on earth. The Ascension also celebrates what comes from God, especially the Spirit Jesus promises before he was lifted up, and the command he gives to make disciples. So we shouldn't be left, as the disciples were in the story of the Ascension, merely staring up toward heaven. We have work to do on earth, the Spirit to strengthen and empower us while we do it, and the return of the Lord to look for when it's all over.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 1:1-11; Ephesians 1:17-23; Matthew 28:16-20 (58).* "Why do you stand looking up toward heaven?"

**MONDAY, MAY 29 EASTER WEEKDAY
Hang in there**

So many times in the gospels the disciples fail to understand or believe in Jesus fully that when they finally come out with an unqualified statement of faith, you would think Jesus would be more approving. But instead he counters with a promise that the road ahead will get tougher, not easier, because of their willingness to follow him. His final assurance, though, is that in the end they will return to him, overcome all obstacles, and have peace. Persevering leads to life forever with Christ.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 19:1-8; John 16:29-33 (297).* "In the world you will have trouble, but take courage, I have conquered the world."

**TUESDAY, MAY 30 EASTER WEEKDAY
Get the job done**

The approaching Pentecost is a good time to reflect on Jesus' journey on earth as well as our own. It is a time to think about what we've accomplished and reflect on what we will be leaving others after we're gone. Jesus was confident that he had finished the work he was commissioned to do. Can each of us say the same? What will your legacy be? In what ways have you glorified God during your tenure on earth? Take into account family, community, church, and the world. Are you satisfied with the part you've played in bringing God's message of hope and love to the least of your brothers and sisters? There's still time. There is this moment, and the next, and the next . . .

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 20:17-27; John 17:1-11a (298).* "I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do."



Invest just five minutes a day, and your faith will deepen and grow—a day at a time.

© 2017 TrueQuest Communications. TakeFiveForFaith.com; mail@takefiveforfaith.com. All rights reserved. Art may be subject to additional copyright. Noncommercial reprints permitted with the following credit: Reprinted with permission from TakeFiveForFaith.com. Scripture citations from the New American Bible Revised Edition. For more information about TAKE FIVE and our regular contributors, go to PrepareTheWord.com. Free daily email and app available online at TakeFiveForFaith.com/subscribe.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 31

**FEAST OF THE VISITATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY
Need a lift?**

In the presence of such good news and so great a mystery as Jesus and his gospel, how, as the hymn goes, can we keep from singing? The meeting of Mary, pregnant with Jesus, and Elizabeth, who is expecting John the Baptist, gives birth to Mary's great song of praise to God, who has done such great things for her and her people: casting down the proud and mighty, lifting up the lowly, feeding the hungry, and showing mercy. When has God lifted you up? What do you have to sing about?

TODAY'S READINGS: *Zephaniah 3:14-18a or Romans 12:9-16; Luke 1:39-56 (572).* "Sing aloud, O daughter Zion . . . Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem!"

**THURSDAY, JUNE 1 MEMORIAL OF JUSTIN, MARTYR
Will you testify?**

Jesus said there is no greater love than to lay down your life for your friends. In the early church, plenty of Christians did just that for the sake of the gospel. Their willingness to die led many who dismissed Christianity to look again. New friends in Christ were born from their courage. So the martyr called Justin came to faith in the second century. A professional philosopher, he was swayed by the "only safe and worthy philosophy" for which people around him were willing to die. As a church apologist, his own life was soon poured out for the sake of the gospel. How can you witness to your faith today?

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 22:30; 23:6-11; John 17:20-26 (300).* "I pray not only for these, but also for those who will believe in me through their word."

**FRIDAY, JUNE 2 MEMORIAL OF MARCELLINUS AND PETER, MARTYRS
Love your life away**

It's a bit jarring for Catholics to think of Rome, the center of the church, as a hostile place, but it was for many early Christians, such as Marcellinus and Peter, who died in the persecutions perpetrated by Roman emperors. We may have few details of their lives, but we do know the church has always venerated them, and so we remember them, too, as some of the first witnesses to the Christian faith. They testify both to the ancient roots of our faith and to its unbroken tradition. They stand as people who gave themselves entirely to God. You, too, can do the same. Practice turning over your heart to God and you will find yourself not far from God's realm.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 25:13b-21; John 21:15-19 (301).* "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you."

**SATURDAY, JUNE 3 MEMORIAL OF CHARLES LWANGA AND COMPANIONS
Be steadfast**

People in power have been known to overstep their bounds and ask for more than is their rightful due. Such demands rarely turn out well—at least in the short run—for anyone who refuses the unfair request. Case in point: Charles Lwanga and hundreds of other Ugandan teens who were tortured and executed in the 19th century after their chieftain grew jealous of their devotion to Christianity and ordered them to denounce their faith. As the young men burned in a massive pyre, their torturers were assured of their victims' deaths only when the martyrs stopped praying. Pray for the spiritual gifts of fortitude and piety when you are asked to do something that violates your deepest faith.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 28:16-20, 30-31; John 21:20-25 (302).* "There are also many other things that Jesus did."