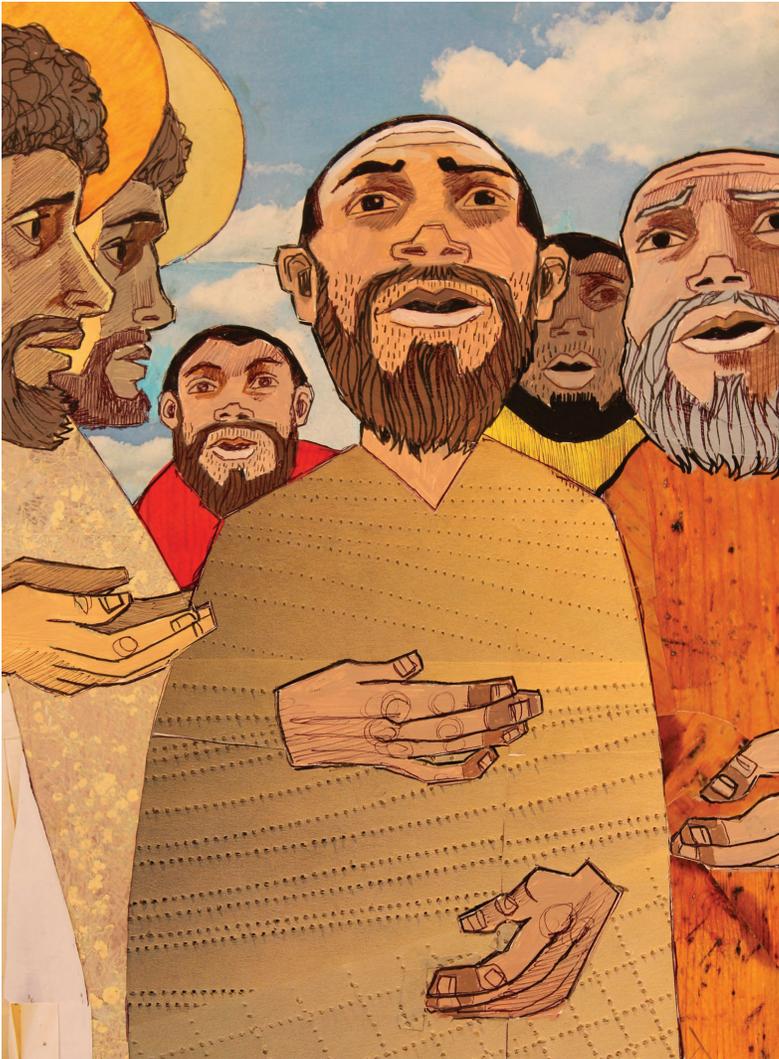


ASCENSION OF THE LORD



Prayer for a Stronger Faith

Gracious Father,
you have provided for us,
and we stand awestruck before you.
Our Lord Jesus has ascended,
but still is with us
as we spread the news of the salvation
he brought to us.

Strengthen our faith so that we will go
about the work
of proclaiming your goodness.
Let us not fear to take on our ministry
to teach and evangelize,
and be part of building up the Body of
Christ.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the
unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God for ever and ever. Amen.

Sunday, May 17, 2015

Our Baptismal Call



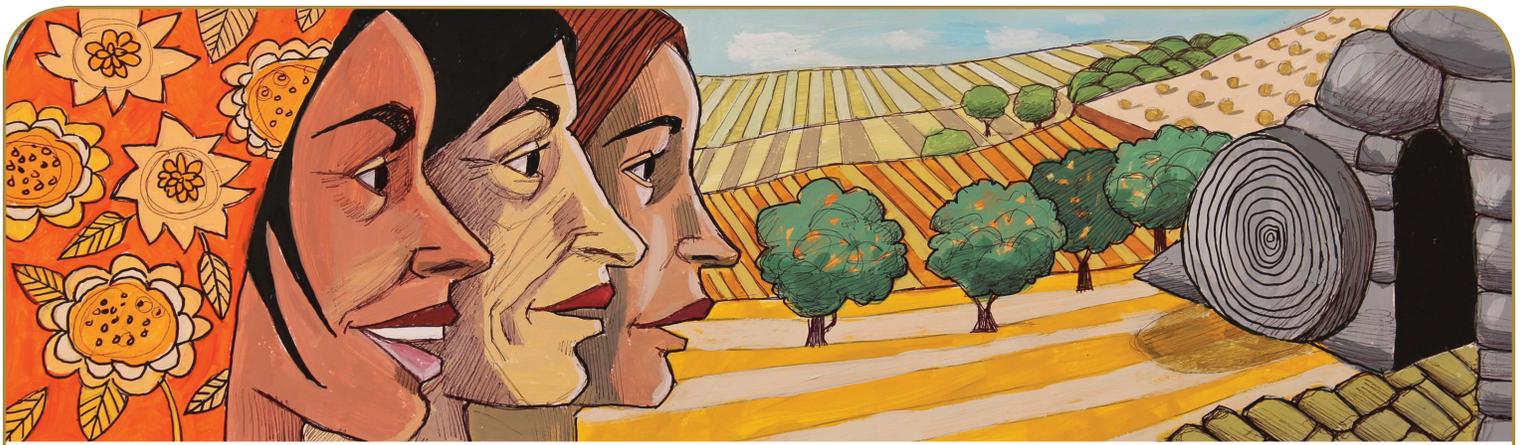
Today's Readings: Acts 1:1–11; Psalm 47: 2–3, 6–7, 8–9 (6); Ephesians 1:17–23 or Ephesians 4:1–13; Mark 16:15–20. The Acts of the Apostles is addressed to a person, Theophilus. We can think of the evangelist Luke as telling a follower a story in two parts. He begins with the Gospel, the Good News of Christ's birth, ministry, Passion, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension. The second part, or the Acts of the Apostles, relates the beginnings of the Church. Since Theophilus means God lover, the story may very well be addressed to you.

Both today's First Reading from Acts and the Gospel from Mark provide accounts of the Ascension. In the narrative from Acts, angels ask the Apostles why they are looking at the sky. The angels could be asking them why they are wasting time that could be spent spreading the Good News.

That message is one for all of us to consider. Our baptismal call is to spread the Gospel. Why are we waiting?

In Mark's account of the Gospel, Jesus instructs the Apostles to go everywhere and proclaim the Gospel to all. Hearers of the Gospel who believe and are baptized will be saved. This message parallels what was heard throughout the Gospel. Jesus noted during his ministry that people were healed because of their faith. To the woman who hemorrhaged until she touched his cloak, Jesus said, "Daughter, your faith has made you well" (Mark 5:34).

With such faith, we proclaim the Gospel. We see in Mark that Jesus ascends but also stays with the Apostles. He "worked with them" and confirmed their preaching through signs. Do we understand that Jesus accompanies us when we tell of the Good News?



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, May 18, 2015

Our Refuge

Though they try, the Apostles in today's Gospel cannot yet understand what Jesus is saying. They may grasp what he means when he says "the hour is coming" or that they will leave him alone. Still, he offers them consolation by telling them, "in me you may have peace." We, too, should be consoled by this. At times, we will seem alone; however, we can always take refuge in Christ. Today's Readings: Acts 19:1-8; Psalm 68:2-3ab, 4-5acd, 6-7ab (33a); John 16:29-33.

Tuesday, May 19, 2015

Glory in the Cross

In today's Gospel, Jesus shows his readiness for the Cross as he prays that the Father glorify him. The discourse notes that Christ already has been glorified in his followers, who have received Jesus' words and know that all comes from the Father. Concerned for his followers, Jesus asks the Father to protect and unify them just as the Father and Son are unified. During Easter Time, we might want to pray for the unity of Christians. Today's Readings: Acts 20:17-27; Psalm 68:10-11, 20-21 (33a); John 17:1-11a.

Wednesday, May 20, 2015

St. Bernadine of Siena, Priest

St. Bernadine (1380-1444) certainly carried out Paul's instructions in today's reading from Acts. He tended the flock in many ways. As a young man, he traveled on foot throughout parts of Italy, preaching devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus. Taking a break from traveling, he wrote on theology and established schools to teach the friars. During the two years before his death, he returned to preaching and died while preaching on his way to Naples. Today's Readings: Acts 20:28-38; Psalm 68:29-30, 33-35a, 35bc-36ab (33a); John 17:11b-19.

Thursday, May 21, 2015

St. Christopher Magallanes, Priest, and Companions, Martyrs

Today we honor twenty-two priests and three laypeople killed during the religious persecution in Mexico between 1915 and 1937. Christopher Magallanes, whose name represents the group, was targeted after he taught seminarians displaced when the government closed seminaries. He and the other martyrs tended to the sacramental needs of Catholics while opposing the use of violence. Today's Readings: Acts 22:30; 23:6-11; Psalm 16:1-2a and 5, 7-8, 9-10, 11 (1); John 17:20-26.

Friday, May 22, 2015

St. Rita of Cascia, Religious

Rita of Cascia (1377-1457), an Italian Augustinian nun, is the patron of abused wives and mourning women. She had been abused by her husband, and after his death and the death of their two sons, entered the Augustinian Order. In today's Gospel, Jesus gives three commands to Peter. He tells him to "feed my lambs," "tend my sheep," and "follow me." St. Rita followed Jesus as she cared for sick nuns and counseled individuals. How is Christ calling you to act in the world when he says, "feed my lambs"? Today's Readings: Acts 25:13b-21; Psalm 103:1-2, 11-12, 19-20ab (19a); John 21:15-19.

Saturday, May 23, 2015

Follow Me

It can be helpful to see that Jesus' first followers were sometimes caught up in their all too human concerns. Jesus has just told Peter to follow him when Peter asks about John. Jesus instructs Peter not to be concerned about John's role and again says, "follow me." We need to stay focused on how we follow Jesus. Concentrating on another's path will be a detriment to our vocation. Today's Readings: Acts 28:16-20, 30-31; Psalm 114:4, 5 and 7 (7b); John 21:20-25.

