



Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord –
Catholic Communication's Sunday;
Mothers' Day and
Special Prayers for Philippine Elections
May 8, 2016

Sunday Liturgy Guide for the Church of the Poor in the Spirit of the New Evangelization

The Church of the Poor, through the Basic Ecclesial Communities, celebrates the Ascension of the Lord by forming new communities of love and liberation here on earth.

Today we celebrate the Feast of the Ascension of our Lord. It is also Catholic Communication's Sunday and Mothers' Day. Our theme for today is: The Church of the Poor, through the Basic Ecclesial Communities, celebrates the Ascension of the Lord by forming new communities of love and liberation here on earth. With this theme, let us now reflect on "A Renewed Integral Evangelization" with PCP-II, when it says:

"PART III. A RENEWED INTEGRAL EVANGELIZATION

A. ANNOUNCING A MESSAGE OF SALVATION

"8. Special Concerns

a) Ecumenism

(216) Despite the Vatican II Decree on Ecumenism in 1964, ecumenism has not been one of the top priorities of the Church in the Philippines. Neither the

clergy nor the lay people have, in general, laid much stress on ecumenical activities. What Vatican II effected in the Philippines was the lessening of hostilities between Catholics and followers of mainline Protestant Churches, the opening towards mutual understanding and tolerance, and the getting together occasionally for common prayer. More frequent are common efforts for development, for the defence of human rights, and for the promotion of justice and peace. But there have not been many significant endeavors to work together towards Christian unity. With gratitude we are glad to note the services rendered to Ecumenism by the Cardinal Bea Institute, the yearly octave of prayer for Christian unity, the cooperative endeavor of Catholics and Protestants in the Philippine Bible Society and the mutual recognition of baptism between the Catholic Church and some other Christian Churches."

Points for Reflection: In your parish, have you attended any ecumenical activity? How do you feel about people who belong to different Christian churches and denominations? Can you work with them on concerns for human rights and welfare, development efforts and the promotion of justice and peace and integrity of creation? What do you understand by "Christian Unity"? ■

Entrance Antiphon: Acts 1: 11:

Men of Galilee, why gaze in wonder at the heavens? This Jesus whom you saw ascending into heaven will return as you saw him go, alleluia.

Introductory Rites

P: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen

P. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And with your spirit.

Introduction and Welcome

P: Dear brothers and sisters: on this Feast of the Ascension of our Lord to the heavens, let us continue to ask God's special grace to be aware of our Christian and Catholic heritage as the prophetic conscience of our people. Today let us ask for the special grace to give witness to God's love and his liberating deeds, especially in areas and among people where these are not effectively found. Let us pray that modern media and the information and communication technologies would be used for evangelization, liberation and development of peoples. Let us also pray for our mothers whose wombs became our first home, our first experience of communication in the world.

Penitential Act

P: Brethren (brothers and sisters), to prepare ourselves to celebrate worthily these sacred mysteries, let us now acknowledge our sins, and ask God for pardon and strength:

P: Lord Jesus, forgive us for living the old values of the earth and not the new values of heaven. Lord, have mercy.

C: Lord, have mercy.

P: Christ Jesus, forgive us for failing to strive for a deep knowledge of you, and

for preferring instead a superficial awareness about you. Christ, have mercy.

C: Christ, have mercy.

P: Lord Jesus, forgive us for our failure to give witness to your words and deeds of love and liberation in the world. Lord, have mercy.

C: Lord, have mercy.

P: May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

C: Amen.

Gloria

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father. Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Collect

P: Let us pray: Grant, we pray, almighty God, that we, who believe that your Only Begotten Son, our Redeemer, ascended this day to the heavens, may in spirit dwell already in heavenly realms. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

C: Amen.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

First Reading: Acts 1:1-11

L: A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

In the first book, Theophilus, I dealt with all that Jesus did and taught until the day he was taken up, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. He presented himself alive to them by many proofs after he had suffered, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. While meeting with them, he enjoined them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for “the promise of the Father about which you have heard me speak; for John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

When they had gathered together they asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” He answered them, “It is not for you to know the times or seasons that the Father has established by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” When he had said this, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him from their sight. While they were looking intently at the sky as he was going, suddenly two men dressed in white garments stood beside them. They said, “Men of Galilee, why are you standing there looking at the sky? This Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven will return in the same way as you have seen him going into heaven.”

L: The Word of the Lord.

C: *Thanks be to God.*

Commentary on Acts 1:1-11:

Luke wants to link this book of the Acts with his Gospel. He addresses this to Theophilus, which in Greek means: Friend of God. He is addressing this to us too as Friends of God. In this short history of the beginnings of the Church, the disciples are being prepared and formed by two stages: (1) the first stage: the appearances of Jesus for forty days, and (2) the second stage: the descent of the Holy Spirit. In between these two stages is the event of the Ascension of Jesus to the heavens. While the first stage shows doubts, tests of faith and discernment of the presence and involvement of the resurrected Jesus in the community of his disciples, the second asserts a new mode of his presence: taken up into the heavens by the clouds means not an “absence” but a new way of being present among us through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will keep the memory of Jesus dynamic and alive in the new community by inspiring this new community to live the new life of Jesus, in contrast to the old ways of being human. The new lives by the values and ways of heaven; the old by the values and ways of the earth.

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

R: *God mounts his throne to shouts of joy: a blare of trumpets for the Lord. or: R. Alleluia.*

All you peoples, clap your hands, shout to God with cries of gladness, For the LORD, the Most High, the awesome, is the great king over all the earth.

R: *God mounts his throne to shouts*

*of joy: a blare of trumpets for the Lord.
or: R. Alleluia.*

God mounts his throne amid shouts of joy; the LORD, amid trumpet blasts. Sing praise to God, sing praise; sing praise to our king, sing praise.

*R: God mounts his throne to shouts of joy: a blare of trumpets for the Lord.
or: R. Alleluia.*

For king of all the earth is God; sing hymns of praise. God reigns over the nations, God sits upon his holy throne.

*R: God mounts his throne to shouts of joy: a blare of trumpets for the Lord.
or: R. Alleluia.*

Commentary on Ps 47:2-3, 6-7, 8-9:

This is a hymn dedicated to the heavenly royalty and divine sovereignty, in two parts. The first part is a universal call to all peoples to applaud and to cry out the joy provoked by the universal sovereignty of God over all creation. The second part proclaims the divine sovereignty of God over the nations; therefore, everyone is called to sing praise to God.

Second Reading: Eph 1:17-231

L: A reading from the Letter of Paul to the Philippians

Brothers and sisters: May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give you a Spirit of wisdom and revelation resulting in knowledge of him. May the eyes of your hearts be enlightened, that you may know what is the hope that belongs to his call, what are the riches of glory in his inheritance among the holy ones, and what is the surpassing greatness of his power for us who believe, in accord with the exercise of his great might: which he worked in Christ, raising him from the dead and seating him at his right hand in the heavens, far above every principality, authority, power, and dominion, and every name that is named not only in **4**

this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things beneath his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of the one who fills all things in every way.

L: The Word of the Lord.

C: *Thanks be to God.*

Commentary on Eph 1:17-23

To be inheritors in Christ of our redemption and divine destiny: this is God's plan for us, to live that Christian life by faith in Jesus and loving our neighbor. Because this is difficult to understand, Paul prays for the Ephesian Christian community – and for us – that they may receive the Spirit of “super-knowledge” of Christ, and not just an ordinary knowledge of him. That “super-knowledge” is the enlightened eyes of the heart that can penetrate much more deeply the faith that leads to hope and to the conviction of what this inheritance truly means for Christians. This is possible to have because Christ has overcome sin and death and is the only sovereign Lord. He has given this “super-knowledge” of him to everyone, not as individuals, but as members of the new community: the Church. Paul is probably suggesting that this Church as an earthly reality is already linked to Christ and has a mission to fulfill: to complete historically the liberation that Jesus has begun!

Alleluia Verse: Mt 28:19a, 20b

R: Alleluia, alleluia. Go and teach all nations, says the Lord; I am with you always, until the end of the world. **R: Alleluia, alleluia.**

Gospel: Luke 24:46-53

P: The Lord be with you.

C: *And with your spirit.*

P: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke.

C: *Glory to you, O Lord.*

Jesus said to his disciples: “Thus it is written that the Christ would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day and that repentance, for the forgiveness of sins, would be preached in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And behold I am sending the promise of my Father upon you; but stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

Then he led them out as far as Bethany, raised his hands, and blessed them. As he blessed them he parted from them and was taken up to heaven. They did him homage and then returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and they were continually in the temple praising God.”

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: *Praise be to you, O Lord Jesus Christ.*

Commentary on Luke 24:46-53

This is the conclusion of the process of education and formation of the disciples and the beginning of their mission: to live and put to into practice what they have learned about Jesus, in the faith in and conviction of his resurrection and to preach repentance for the forgiveness of sins to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. By going up to heaven, Jesus Christ fulfills his promise that he is going back to the Father to prepare a place for his disciples even as they will be gifted with the Holy Spirit who will be their guide and advocate in their witnessing on earth. The earth, giving witness to Jesus’ words and deeds on earth, is the ground for going with him to heaven.

Join Fr. Ben Alforque, MSC of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in **GOSPEL BREAK**, a short yet entertaining and insightful discussion of this Sunday’s Gospel on YouTube.

Visit gospelbreak.wordpress.com. Or scan this QR code with your Smartphone or tablet.



Homily: The Church of the Poor, through the Basic Ecclesial Communities, celebrates the Ascension of the Lord by forming new communities of love and liberation here on earth.

Summary of the Sunday Reading Message	Concrete description of the poor people and their situation	Reflection/ Points for reflection/ Call/ Challenge
The Church of the Poor, through the Basic Ecclesial Communities, celebrates the Ascension of the Lord by forming new communities of love and liberation here on earth.	Describe the situation of mothers in your parish and BEC: mothers who can hardly give food, clothing and shelter to their children; mothers who have killed or abandoned their children. How did you respond to this situation?	Christian churches must work towards mutual understanding, tolerance, common prayer and common efforts for development, human rights, justice and peace and unity.

Profession of Faith

P: Dear sisters and brothers, let us humbly and confidently raise our voices in prayer to our heavenly Father. For every prayer let our response be: Lord, make us open to your Holy Spirit.

R: Lord, make us open to your Holy Spirit.

L: Let us pray for the Church: that, being a Church of the Poor spread all over the world, she may continue to celebrate the Ascension of the Lord by forming new communities of love and liberation here on earth. Let us pray to the Lord.

R: Lord, make us open to your Holy Spirit.

L: For our Holy Father, Pope Francis, for the bishops, priests, deacons, for those in consecrated life and for all those who are entrusted with the care and administration of the church as People of God: that they may continue to discern the promptings of the Holy Spirit in events and places where God's love and deeds of liberation are not effectively found. Let us pray to the Lord.

R: Lord, make us open to your Holy Spirit.

L: For world leaders and all those entrusted with governance and administration of the goods of the earth: that they make laws, policies and structures that promote communication right as fundamental human right, and make the communication and information technologies accessible to all, especially to the poor and the indigenous peoples. Let us pray to the Lord.

R: Lord, make us open to your Holy Spirit.

L: For all of us, inhabitants of the earth and citizens of heaven: that we may live our lives according to the values of the new life lived in common by honoring our mothers, being grateful to motherhood and by caring for Mother Earth through defense of the integrity of creation. Let us pray to the Lord.

R: Lord, make us open to your Holy Spirit.

L: For the coming Philippine Elections: that we will all strive to conscientiously exercise our right to suffrage by voting or not voting; that should they vote,

people may choose candidates whose capability and programs approximate the values of God's Kingdom, reflect the love of God for people especially the poor and creation, and that we may have an orderly, peaceful, honest, credible and meaningful electoral exercise. Let us pray to the Lord.

R: Lord, make us open to your Holy Spirit.

L: For our beloved dead: that in the forgiveness of their sins, they may find eternal rest in the heart of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Let us pray to the Lord.

R: Lord, make us open to your Holy Spirit.

L: For our special intentions, in the silence of our hearts. (*pause*)... Let us pray to the Lord.

R: Lord, make us open to your Holy Spirit.

P: Lord, these are the prayers we present to you today. On the feast of the Ascension of our Lord, help us to love you and know you more, by encountering you alive in our lives and in creation, yesterday, today and tomorrow. By your Spirit, help us to stand our ground to freely express our will in the coming elections, so that we may have elected officials who will serve your people and creation in love and acts of liberation and development. Mold us to become the gentle but firm hearts of your heart in the world. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R: Amen

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Preparation of the Altar and the Gifts

P: Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation,

C: Blessed be God forever.

P: Pray, brethren (brothers and sisters), that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

C: May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

Prayer over the Offerings

P: We offer sacrifice now in supplication, O Lord, to honor the wondrous Ascension of your Son: grant, we pray, that through this most holy exchange we, too, may rise up to the heavenly realms. Through Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

Prayer of the Eucharist

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And with your spirit.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them up to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right and just.

P: It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For the Lord Jesus, the King of glory, conqueror of sin and death, ascended (today) to the highest heavens, as the Angels gazed in wonder.

Mediator between God and humankind, judge of the world and Lord of hosts, he ascended not to distance himself from our lowly state but that we, his members, might be confident of following

where he, our Head and Founder, has gone before.

Therefore, overcome with paschal joy, every land, every people exults in your praise and even the heavenly Powers, with the angelic hosts, sing together the unending hymn of your glory, as they acclaim:

A: Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Acclamation

P: The mystery of faith.

When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again.

(Concluding the Eucharistic Prayer, the priest says:)

Through him, and with him, and in him, O God, almighty Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, for ever and ever.

C: Amen.

Communion Rite

The Lord's Prayer

Doxology

C: For yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever and ever.

Sign of Peace

P: Lord Jesus Christ, who said to your Apostles; Peace ... Who live and reign for ever and ever.

C: Amen.

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: *And with your spirit.*

P: Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

Breaking of the Bread

A: *Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world ... grant us peace.*

Communion

P: Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

A: *Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.*

Communion Antiphon: (Mt 28: 20)

Behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age, alleluia.

Prayer after Communion

P: Let us pray: Almighty ever-living God, who allow those on earth to celebrate divine mysteries, grant, we pray, that Christian hope may draw us onward to where our nature is united with you. Through Christ our Lord.

C: *Amen.*

Final Blessing

P: The Lord be with you.

C: *And with your spirit.*

P: Bow your heads and pray for God's blessings: May almighty God bless you, for on this very day his Only Begotten Son pierced the heights of heaven and

unlocked for you the way to ascend to where he is.

C: *Amen.*

P: May he grant that, as Christ after his Resurrection was seen plainly by his disciples, so when he comes as Judge he may show himself merciful to you for all eternity.

C: *Amen.*

P: And may you, who believe he is seated with the Father in his majesty, know with joy the fulfillment of his promise to stay with you until the end of time.

C: *Amen.*

P: And may the blessings of almighty God, + the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy + Spirit, come down upon you and remain with you forever.

C: *Amen.*

Dismissal

P: Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord.

C: *Thanks be to God.* ■

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