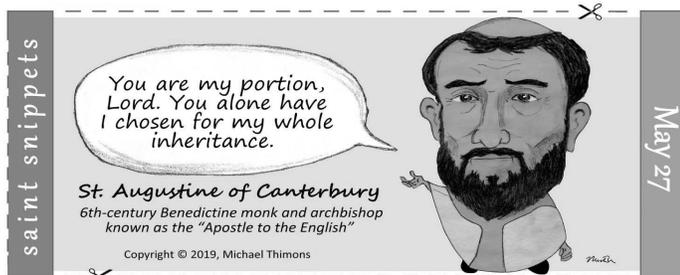


## Saint Philip Neri (1515-1595)

May 26

In a shop near the Vatican, a group of Americans laughed as the shopkeeper showed off his fluent English and latest souvenir, a key ring whose papal portrait, when pressed, activated a recorded blessing. Through the shop window, two clerics scowled disapproval. The shopkeeper grunted, "They're a very somber order who've left the Church. I recognize them." "By their long robes?" an American asked. "Many in Rome wear robes," replied the shopkeeper. "It's their long faces!" When Philip Neri arrived in sixteenth-century Rome, there was reason to be somber. Swiss Guards had been massacred on Saint Peter's steps defending the pope. Parts of Europe were abandoning the Church. But Philip resolved to be an "apostle of joy," drawing especially the young to Christ—and frequent confession and Communion—by his sincere interest in their problems, prayerful example, and gentle humor. His "Oratory," a movement as well as a place, provided recreation and devotion in a joyful atmosphere of companionship, service, and liturgy. Philip Neri challenges each of us to begin improving Church and world by changing ourselves with unfailing joy.

—Peter Scagnelli, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.



## "Pushed" Out On Mission

There is a delightful character in the original Dr. Dolittle Tales called the "Pushmi-Pullyu." It is a beast with two identical halves, with a head at each end. No matter which direction the beast walks, one end is the "push me" and the other is the "pull you." Today's feast is a bit like that in the life of the church. In the book of the Acts of the Apostles, it is the ascension of Christ that calls for the Holy Spirit, which consequently sends or "pushes" the church out on its mission. This is the message that we hear from the angels today as they tell the friends of Jesus not to look up into the clouds, but to get busy. It is the message of Jesus himself in Matthew's Gospel, as he sends them out to baptize. He also tells them, "I am with you always, until the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). And it is this message, confident in faith that Jesus has ascended to shouts of joy, that "pulls" us along to our final destiny. The life of the faithful disciple, sent into the world on mission, will one day know the same risen, ascended glory.

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## Readings for the Week

<b>Monday:</b>	Acts 19:1-8; Ps 68:2-3ab, 4-5acd, 6-7ab; Jn 16:29-33
<b>Tuesday:</b>	Acts 20:17-27; Ps 68:10-11, 20-21; Jn 17:1-11a
<b>Wednesday:</b>	Acts 20:28-38; Ps 68:29-30, 33-36ab; Jn 17:11b-19
<b>Thursday:</b>	Acts 22:30; 23:6-11; Ps 16:1-2a, 5, 7-11; Jn 17:20-26
<b>Friday:</b>	Acts 25:13b-21; Ps 103:1-2, 11-12, 19-20ab; Jn 21:15-19
<b>Saturday:</b>	Acts 28:16-20, 30-31; Ps 11:4, 5, 7; Jn 21:20-25
<b>Sunday:</b>	Vigil: Gn 11:1-9 or Ex 19:3-8a, 16-20b or Ez 37:1-14 or Jl 3:1-5; Ps 104:1-2, 24, 35, 27-28, 29-30; Rom 8:22-27; Jn 7:37-39 Day: Acts 2:1-11; Ps 104:1, 24, 29-31, 34; 1 Cor 12:3b-7, 12-13; Jn 20:19-23

## Saints and Special Observances

<b>Sunday:</b>	The Ascension of the Lord; World Communications Day
<b>Monday:</b>	St. Bede the Venerable; St. Gregory VII; St. Mary Magdalene de' Pazzi; Memorial Day
<b>Tuesday:</b>	St. Philip Neri
<b>Wednesday:</b>	St. Augustine of Canterbury; Shavuot (Jewish observance) begins at sunset
<b>Thursday:</b>	Julian Calendar Ascension
<b>Friday:</b>	St. Paul VI

## Heaven

The world is only peopled to people heaven.

—St. Francis de Sales

## Today's Readings

**First Reading** — Jesus tells the disciples that they will be witnesses to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:1-11).

**Psalm** — God mounts his throne to shouts of joy: a blare of trumpets for the Lord (Psalm 47).

**Second Reading** — May the Father of glory give you a Spirit of wisdom and revelation (Ephesians 1:17-23).

**Gospel** — Jesus instructs the Eleven to baptize and teach people of all nations (Matthew 28:16-20).

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## *Treasures From Our Tradition*

There was a curious custom years ago that perhaps developed in an age when Easter was seen less as a baptismal season than as a kind of tour through the deeds of the Risen Christ. The paschal candle, sign of Christ's presence, was removed from public view on Ascension Thursday, banished to the baptistery.

Ascension day does speak of the hidden aspects of Christ's life among us, but it does not have much to do with God's absence. Christ has not shed his human life like an inconvenient shell, but rather has taken humanity into heaven. The theologian Karl Rahner said that it is a festival of "the nearness of God." In vanishing from our sight, Christ has become utterly available to all at every time and every place, and is "closer to us than he ever was."

Today is the feast of believing that beyond our final breath is a presence that waits for us, a banquet prepared, a tender homecoming embrace. Rahner said that today is a festival of the future of the world, a day for anticipating the world's true destiny, and therefore hardly a day to be going around hiding candles!

—Rev. James Field, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

**T**he key to unlocking the scriptures is in Paul's letter to the Ephesians as we pray, "May the eyes of your hearts be enlightened." People see and hear things but simply have a hard time believing they are true. In our first reading from the very beginning of the Acts of the Apostles, Luke starts where his Gospel left off—the ascension of Jesus. For as long as Jesus spent preparing the disciples, they were still foggy about what was happening, and spent time staring at the sky wondering where he went. In today's Gospel, the disciples still doubt Jesus to the very last minute. In the letter to the Ephesians, Paul speaks to the new Christian community, but could be preaching to each of us in the pews as he says, "I can explain it to you, but I can't make you believe. This is where faith comes in." May we all pray for the gift of enlightenment today!

### *Here Is The Game Plan*

When we hear an excerpt from a particular Gospel, it is easy to get the details and stories from all the Gospels all mixed up and combined into one. Theologian Gerhard Lohfink called this "Making Gospel Soup!" To understand today's Gospel passage, we must realize that this is material particular to Matthew and in his telling it takes place right after the Resurrection. There has been no "doubting Thomas" or any of the other stories that we've heard since Easter.

How often have you made a plan at an event, saying, "If we get split up, just go back to the car and wait" or "Stay at the fountain in the mall—I'll find you!" Earlier in

Matthew, Jesus told the women at the tomb to tell the disciples, "If something happens, head back to Galilee" (28:10). This was the game plan and was both a geographic reference and a spiritual one. "Go back to what you know, what you remember." They were confused and hurting, but did as Jesus said, returning to Galilee, specifically to the mountain where they had a powerful experience with him before. That would make it understandable that the disciples showed up but were a bit leery or doubting.

### *You've Got This*

Put yourself in the disciples' shoes. This is May, the season of graduations, new jobs, new cars, marriages, and so many other transitions as young people strike out on their own. Jesus reminded the disciples, "I have the power, and I've been teaching you for three years. Now you have the power. Go. Make Disciples. Baptize in the name of the Trinity. Teach them what I taught you." Surely the disciples were frightened, and Jesus must have felt both fear and pride. This was the moment that happens in every lifetime. It was time for these disciples, these students, his "children" to become the masters. And how did he reassure them? As parents and teachers and mentors have been doing for centuries. He smiled and reminded them, "Behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age." Or as we might say, "You've got this."

Today's Readings: Acts 1:1–11 Ps 47:2–3, 6–7, 8–9; Eph 1:17–23; Mt 28:16–20

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## *Sunday Readings*

*May 24, 2020*

### *The Ascension of the Lord*

#### **Reading 1**

**Acts 1:1–11**

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.”

#### **Responsorial Psalm**

**Ps 47:2–3, 6–7, 8–9**

R. (6) 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.

#### **Reading 2**

**Eph 1:17–23**

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 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.

#### **Gospel**

**Mt 28:16–20**

The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them. When they saw him, they worshiped, but they doubted. Then Jesus approached and said to them, “All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”

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# Prayer of the Faithful

*May 24, 2020*  
*The Ascension of the Lord*

**Sent out into the world by Jesus Christ, let us pray now for the needs  
of all the people in the world.**

**For Pope Francis and all our Church leaders whose example leads  
us to throw open the doors of the Church to all people,  
let us pray to the Lord.**

**For an end to violence in the world and on our streets and in  
our homes, as we continue to learn that violent actions only lead to  
more violence,  
let us pray to the Lord.**

**For doctors and scientists, may their work to protect us and heal us  
during this pandemic be heeded and blessed,  
let us pray to the Lord.**

**For those who work in ministries of reconciliation and healing  
as they bring wholeness to those who experience alienation, anger,  
and loneliness,  
let us pray to the Lord.**

**For all who graduate this unusual spring as they celebrate their  
accomplishments and prepare for a new phase of work, service,  
or scholarship in their lives,  
let us pray to the Lord.**

**For all those who are sick, for all who suffer from  
COVID-19, and for all who have died,  
especially N., N., and N.,  
let us pray to the Lord.**

**For all the prayers that we hold in the silence of our hearts;  
for all our intentions spoken and unspoken,  
let us pray to the Lord.**

**O God of all,  
your risen Son commissioned us to go out to the world in his name.  
Hear these our humble prayers which we make on behalf of this world,  
and grant them through him, who is our Lord for ever and ever.**

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