

## READINGS

### **The First Reading** - Acts 1: 6-14

After the disciples knew Jesus had parted from them for the last time, they continued with their prayer together as they waited for the new Spirit he had promised.

### **The Psalm** - Psalm 68: 1-10, 32-35

### **The Second Reading** - 1 Peter 4: 12-14, 5: 6-11

Since Easter Day we have read from this letter every Sunday. It has said much about Christian life under persecution, and now ends with a rousing call to steadfastness with the promise of eternal glory.

### **The Gospel Reading** - John 17: 1-11

On the night he was betrayed Jesus prayed not so much for himself but for those who would take up his work after this earthly life was over. His glory is now revealed in the world by those he calls his own.

[http://bible.oremus.org/?show\\_adj=no&passages=%0AActs%201:6-14%0A%2BOR%0AEzekiel%2039:21-29%0Acw%20Psalm%2068:1-10,%2032-35%0A1%20Peter%204:12-14;%205:6-11%0AJohn%2017:%201-11](http://bible.oremus.org/?show_adj=no&passages=%0AActs%201:6-14%0A%2BOR%0AEzekiel%2039:21-29%0Acw%20Psalm%2068:1-10,%2032-35%0A1%20Peter%204:12-14;%205:6-11%0AJohn%2017:%201-11)

## COLLECTS OF THE DAY

### **Collect One**

O God the King of glory,  
who hast exalted thine only Son Jesus Christ  
with great triumph unto thy kingdom in heaven;  
We beseech thee, leave us not comfortless;  
but send to us thine Holy Spirit to comfort us,  
and exalt us unto the same place  
whither our Saviour Christ is gone before,  
who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, world without end.

### **Collect Two**

O God the King of Glory,  
you have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ  
with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven:  
Mercifully give us faith to know  
that, as he promised,  
he abides with us on earth to the end of time;  
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

## POST COMMUNION

Eternal Giver of love and power,  
your Son Jesus Christ has sent us into all the world  
to preach the gospel of his kingdom.  
Confirm us in this mission,

## The Seventh Sunday of Easter Year A May 28th, 2017

and help us to live the good news we proclaim;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

### PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE 1

You are free, Lord, your Ascension has set you free: free from the constraints of human existence, outside the limitations of time and space; free to be here with us now, in our worship and fellowship; and free to be with us always; for in your freedom you have bound yourself to us with a promise: "Lo! I am with you always even to the very end of time."

We pray, Lord, for those who need to feel you close, who need the assurance of your love, the encouragement of your Spirit.

[Silence]

Lord in your mercy,

**Hear our prayer.**

We pray for those who are persecuted, who are discriminated against, who are mocked because of their faith or race or colour.

[Silence]

Lord in your mercy,

**Hear our prayer.**

We pray for those who are imprisoned, who are tortured, who are exiled, because they have fought, struggled and spoken out for the rights of their people.

[Silence]

Lord in your mercy,

**Hear our prayer.**

We pray for those who are destitute, who are hungry, who are refugees, because of the selfishness and apathy of the world. We pray for those who are filled with guilt, who are broken-hearted, who are perplexed, because a relationship has gone wrong.

[Silence]

Lord in your mercy,

**Hear our prayer.**

We pray for those who are feeling fed up, who are in discomfort, who are afraid, because they are ill in body, mind or spirit.

[Silence]

Lord in your mercy,

**Hear our prayer.**

We pray for those who are numbed, who are angry, who are desolate, because they have been bereaved.

[Silence]

Lord in your mercy,

**Hear our prayer.**

We pray for those caught up in war, and violence, and hatred; especially the innocent victims of these evils.

[Silence]

Lord in your mercy,

**Hear our prayer.**

## The Seventh Sunday of Easter Year A May 28th, 2017

We pray at this time of financial turmoil, for those who have lost jobs, those who struggle to pay bills, and those who have the power to affect positive change. Be with us all, Lord: in all our daily struggles as we seek to follow you.

[Silence]

Lord in your mercy,

**Hear our prayer.**

Be with us all, Lord: in our periods of doubt and despair; and in our times of happiness, health and loving.

Be with us all, Lord: until that time when in your in your Kingdom of Love our joy will know no end: **Amen**

### PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE 2

As Jesus prayed for his first disciples so also does he pray for us. Let ask that our prayers be joined with his, saying, "Hear us, Lord," and respond, "Hear us, Alleluia!"

For our Bishop \_\_\_\_\_ (*eg, on his upcoming anniversary of ordination*), that guided by the Holy Spirit, he might speak prophetically on behalf of the poorest members of our communities.

Hear us, Lord

**Hear us, Alleluia!**

For bankers and leaders of financial institutions who seek to live their Christian faith at work, that they might be strengthened in their desire to use wealth to help the homeless and the poor.

Hear us, Lord

**Hear us, Alleluia!**

For those who suffer from the anxiety of a stress-filled work place, that they might know peace through the transforming power of God's love.

Hear us, Lord

**Hear us, Alleluia!**

For those preparing for baptism/confirmation, especially \_\_\_\_\_, as they prepare to affirm their vocations as Christians in the world, that they might hear God's great call to live their lives in order that their lives might be fulfilled through service in Christ's name.

Hear us, Lord

**Hear us, Alleluia!**

For our silence in the face of our government's neglect of the poor, for our failure to speak in the face of renewed nuclear testing, and for our fear which keeps us from reaching out in love, we ask forgiveness. Redeem us, and strengthen us for renewed service in your name.

Hear us, Lord

**Hear us, Alleluia!**

### PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE 3

We offer these prayers trusting fully that they will be heard. **Amen.**

[www.churchnewsireland.org](http://www.churchnewsireland.org)

## The Seventh Sunday of Easter Year A May 28th, 2017

Father, we pray for your holy Catholic Church;  
*That we all may be one.*

Grant that every member of the Church may truly and humbly serve you;  
*That your Name may be glorified by all people.*

We pray for all bishops, priests, and deacons;  
*That they may be faithful ministers of your Word and Sacraments.*

We pray for all who govern and hold authority in the nations of the world;  
*That there may be justice and peace on the earth.*

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;  
*That our works may find favor in your sight.*

Have compassion on those who suffer from any grief or trouble;  
*That they may be delivered from their distress.*

Give to the departed eternal rest.  
*Let light perpetual shine upon them.*

We praise you for your saints who have entered into joy;  
*May we also come to share in your heavenly kingdom.*

Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.

### PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE 4

With all our heart and with all our mind, let us pray to the Lord, saying "Lord, have mercy."

For the peace from above, for the loving-kindness of God, and for the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace of the world, for the welfare of the Holy Church of God, and for the unity of all peoples, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For our Bishop, and for all the clergy and people, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For our Queen/President, for the leaders of the nations, and for all in authority, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For this city (town, village, \_\_\_\_\_), for every city and community, and for those who live in them, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For seasonable weather, and for an abundance of the fruits of the earth, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

## The Seventh Sunday of Easter Year A May 28th, 2017

For the good earth which God has given us, and for the wisdom and will to conserve it, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For those who travel on land, on water, or in the air [or through outer space], let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the aged and infirm, for the widowed and orphans, and for the sick and the suffering, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For \_\_\_\_\_, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the poor and the oppressed, for the unemployed and the destitute, for prisoners and captives, and for all who remember and care for them, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For all who have died in the hope of the resurrection, and for all the departed, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For deliverance from all danger, violence, oppression, and degradation, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the absolution and remission of our sins and offenses, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

That we may end our lives in faith and hope, without suffering and without reproach, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Defend us, deliver us, and in thy compassion protect us, O Lord, by thy grace.

**Lord, have mercy.**

In the communion of [\_\_\_\_\_ and of all the] saints, let us commend ourselves, and one another, and all our life, to Christ our God.

**To thee, O Lord our God.**

### PRAYERS

Let us pray [that we may recognise the presence of Christ]

Father, help us to keep in mind that Christ our Saviour lives with you in glory and promised to remain with us until the end of time. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

*AAPB*

## The Seventh Sunday of Easter Year A May 28th, 2017

O God, whose Son, Jesus, prayed for his disciples, and sent them into the world to proclaim the coming of your kingdom: by your Holy Spirit, hold the Church in unity, and keep it faithful to your word, so that, breaking bread together, we may be one with Christ in faith and love and service, now and for ever. **Amen.** *APBA*

### Intercession

Almighty God, We come today reminded of your greatness and glory, your sovereign power and eternal purpose all expressed so wonderfully in Jesus Christ, our Lord: Risen and Ascended.

We thank you for the wonder of Ascension, that marvellous yet mysterious moment in the life of the Apostles which left them gazing heavenwards in confusion yet departing in joy.

We thank you for the way that it brought the earthly ministry of Jesus to a fitting conclusion; signifying his oneness with you, and demonstrating your final seal of approval on all that he had done.

We thank you that through his Ascension Jesus is now set free to be Lord of all: no longer bound to a particular place or time, but with us always - able to reach even to the ends of the earth.

We thank you that through his departing Jesus prepared for his coming again: through his Spirit, his Church, and his coming again in glory.

Gracious God, Forgive us for so often failing to grasp the wonder of Ascension, for living each day as though it had never been. Forgive the smallness of our vision, the narrowness of our outlook, the weakness of our love, the nervousness of our witness, our repeated failure to recognize the fullness of your revelation in Christ. Give us a deeper sense of wonder, a stronger faith,

Father God,  
and a greater understanding of all you have done.

Like the Apostles, we too will never fully understand all Ascension means. We accept, but we do not fully understand. We believe, yet we have many questions. Help us, despite our uncertainty, to hold firm to the great truth that the wonder of Christ Jesus goes far beyond anything we can ever imagine, and in that faith may we live each day to his glory and honour: Amen

### SERMON OUTLINE 1

Consider building on the words of William Temple:

William Temple, who was Archbishop of Canterbury in the 1940s wrote:

“The Ascension of Christ is his liberation from all restrictions of time and space. It does not represent his removal from earth, but his constant presence everywhere on earth.”  
Lost to sight in the clouds! Taking off, jet propelled like a human rocket to return to – where?

Is this how it was, the Ascension?

Caught up into all the glory of God and so here – and everywhere, no longer imprisoned by physical limitations: unseen but not unexperienced.

One with the Father, Jesus takes into the Godhead all that it means to be human.

And so I know, that I am known, by the Almighty; known, and understood.

[From *“Turns But A Stone”* by Edmund Banyard]

## SERMON OUTLINE 2

### **“Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven?” - Acts 1:11**

The implication is that the disciples should now be looking in the direction where the message of Jesus would lead them.

A moving meditation on this moment by an American theologian [Rev. Dr. Barbara K. Lundblad - Professor of Preaching, Union Theological Seminary, New York] asks what might have happened if, instead of looking upwards, the Disciples had looked downward and seen Jesus' footprints in the dust of the earth. Here is where their focus should be: on the footprints which remind them of everything Jesus said and did. Rather than looking up, waiting for something to happen, the Disciples are called to walk in Jesus footsteps and to be his witnesses - as they spread his good news throughout Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.

How often is our own faith journey marked by looking upwards to the heavens - waiting for something to happen, confused by change, looking for a perfect world and perhaps yearning for how things used to be?

Surely our Christian journey calls us to look across the face of the earth as we seek Jesus' footprints, measure our own steps against them, embrace transformation and empowerment, and decide where those footprints might be leading us.

Ascension is not a call to look upwards: it is a call to trust that Christ's promise is down - and in - and around - and among us.

NB If using this sermon idea it is, of course, important to be mindful of Colossians 3:2, which says: “Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth...” Seeking Jesus at work in the world is not the same as focusing on earthly things.

Often we can “set our minds on things above” by looking to where Jesus is active all around us.

SERMON OUTLINE 3

**John 17:1-11 Jesus looked up to heaven...** It was a traumatic evening.... *the night that he was betrayed* – and in this time of mental turmoil, Jesus turns to his Father in what is known as “**the High Priestly Prayer**”..

**1. The Prayer of the Lord:-** *Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son – bring glory through my death and victory over sin & Satan & death... His desire is to fulfil the Father’s will and complete His Salvation Plan - to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. 3And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.*

**2. The Presence of the Father:-** *5 So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed – in the days of pre-history – a restoration to Jesus’ pre-earthly glory before Creation – a fantastic concept – stupendous thought – so difficult for our finite minds to comprehend – the claim of a lunatic or the Lord? I am coming to you – returning home – meanwhile....*

**3. The Protection of the Disciples:-** *the 12 and all followers in subsequent days 6 ‘I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. 9I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours.*

*They belong to you – your children by faith – what a wonderful concept! 7Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; 8for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me in the world, Holy Father, protect them in your name .... so that they may be one, as we are one...*

By Norman Porteous

## ONLINE SERMON SOURCES

### Jesus didn't say, 'Beam me up

The Rev. Ben E. Helmer, Sermons that Work, Episcopal Digital Network  
<http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/stw/2014/05/13/7-easter-a-2014/>

### You Can't Keep a Good Man Down

The Rev. Dr. James B. Lemler, Day 1  
[http://day1.org/1092-you\\_cant\\_keep\\_a\\_good\\_man\\_down](http://day1.org/1092-you_cant_keep_a_good_man_down)

### Footprints on the Earth

The Rev. Barbara K. Lundblad, Day 1  
[http://day1.org/937-footprints\\_on\\_the\\_earth](http://day1.org/937-footprints_on_the_earth)

## CHILDREN

### Children’s / All-Age Talk

1. A simple re-telling of the Ascension story as found in Acts 1:1-11 is a possibility. An old Church of Scotland Summer Mission trick is to read the story through properly asking the congregation to listen carefully – telling them that on the second reading you will make some changes. When it comes to the second read-through you can make



## The Seventh Sunday of Easter Year A May 28th, 2017

obvious changes, silly changes and subtle changes. The children, in particular, will love pointing out the mistakes you have made. This is a good way of reading and learning a Bible Story in a fun way.

2. Talk about those things that are unseen but all around us: air, electricity etc. Draw the comparison with Jesus. When he walked with the Disciples in Galilee, Jesus was restricted to being in one place at any time – just as we all are – due to the laws of space and time. Now because of the Ascension, Jesus can be with us always. We may not see him, just as we do not see air or electricity, but we can know his loving presence.
3. Kingship is another possibility for an All-Age or Children's Address at Ascension time – especially if you don't mark Christ The King Sunday as a congregation. Make several cardboard crowns with the names of famous kings and queens on the front. Give them to willing volunteers. One of the crowns should say: JESUS. Then read out the names of kingdoms [or show a map or picture on a screen] and ask which of the kings/queens ruled over that Kingdom; for example Robert the Bruce and the Kingdom of Scotland. Leave "The Whole Earth" Psalm 47 till the end. Talk about the faults

*by Rev Bryce Calder, St David's Memorial, Kirkintilloch*

### **Worshiping with Children, Easter 7A**

Including children in the congregation's worship, using the Revised Common Lectionary, Carolyn C. Brown

<http://worshipingwithchildren.blogspot.co.uk/2014/04/year-the-ascension-of-lord-thursday-may.html>

### **Being Squirrely,**

Fran Woodruff, On the Chancel Steps

<https://onthechancelsteps.wordpress.com/2014/05/12/squirrely/>

### **Worshiping with Children, Sunday after the Ascension**

Including children in the congregation's worship, using the Revised Common Lectionary, Carolyn C. Brown

<http://worshipingwithchildren.blogspot.co.uk/2011/04/year-the-sunday-after-ascension-of.html>

## **HYMN SUGGESTIONS**

### **Acts 1:1-11**

When We All Get to Heaven

Lo, He Comes with Clouds Descending

### **Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35**

From All That Dwell Below the Skies

O Word of God Incarnate

### **1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11**

Soldiers of Christ, Arise

Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus

### **John 17:1-11**

[www.churchnewsireland.org](http://www.churchnewsireland.org)

**The Seventh Sunday of Easter Year A May 28th, 2017**

Here, O My Lord, I See Thee  
O Food to Pilgrims Given

Sorry - no list on C of I site for this day

**Please commend this resource to colleagues - they simply send an email to [churchnewsireland@gmail.com](mailto:churchnewsireland@gmail.com) with the message Passwords in the title**