

**Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord – A
& The Seventh Week of Easter
May 17 – 23, 2026**

Sun
May 17 Seventh Sunday of Easter & Solemnity of the Lord's Ascension
LET THE KING OF GLORY ENTER
A Commentary by St Gregory of Nyssa

Mon
18 Monday of the 7th Week of Easter
THAT WE MAY ASCEND TO WHERE HE IS
A Sermon by St. Aelred of Rievaulx

Tue
19 Tuesday of the 7th Week of Easter
HOW JESUS IS HEAVEN TO THE SOUL
A Reflection from The Scale of Perfection by Walter Hilton

Wed
20 Wednesday of the 7th Week of Easter
WHAT TRUE FAITH IS
A Reflection from True Christianity by Johann Arndt

Thu
21 Thursday of the 7th Week of Easter
A CALL TO CHRISTIAN MATURITY IN FAITH
A Reflection taken from a sermon by St. Pope Leo the Great

Fri
22 **DESERT DAY**
Friday of the 7th Week of Easter
CONCERNING THE TRIPLE LOVE OF GOD
A Reflection from a sermon by St Bernard of Clairvaux

Sat
23 Saturday of the 7th Week of Easter
WHY IT IS GOOD FOR US THAT CHRIST LEAVE US
From a Homily on the Gospel of John by St. Augustine

Sunday

LET THE KING OF GLORY ENTER

A Commentary by St Gregory of Nyssa

The gospel describes the Lord's life upon earth and his return to heaven. But the sublime prophet David, as though unencumbered by the weight of his body, rose above himself to mingle with the heavenly powers and record for us their words as they accompanied the Master when he came down from heaven. Ordering the angels on earth entrusted with the care of human life to raise the gates, they cried: *Lift up your gates, you princes; be lifted up, you everlasting doors. Let the King of glory enter.*

But because wherever he is, he who contains all things in himself makes himself like those who receive him, not only becoming a man among human beings, but also, when among angels, conforming his nature to theirs, the gatekeepers asked: *Who is this King of glory?*

He is the strong one, they were told, mighty in battle, the one who is to grapple with and overthrow the captor of the human race who has the power of death. When this last enemy has been destroyed, he will restore us to freedom and peace.

Now the mystery of Christ's death is fulfilled, victory is won, and the cross, the sign of triumph, is raised on high. He who gives us the noble gifts of life and a kingdom has ascended into heaven, leading captivity captive. Therefore, the same command is repeated. Once more, the gates of heaven must open for him. Our guardian angels, who have now become his escorts, order them to be flung wide so that he may enter and regain his former glory. But he is not recognized in the soiled garments of our life, in clothes reddened by the winepress of human sin. Again, the escorting angels are asked: *Who is this King of glory?* The answer is no longer, *The strong one, mighty in battle*, but, *the Lord of hosts*, he who has gained power over the whole universe, who has recapitulated all things in himself, who is above all things, who has restored all creation to its former state: *He is the King of glory.*

You see how much David has added to our joy in this feast and contributed to the gladness of the Church. Therefore, as far as we can, let us imitate the prophet by our love for God, by gentleness, and by patience with those who hate us. Let the prophet's teaching help us to live in a way pleasing to God in Christ Jesus our Lord, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Monday

THAT WE MAY ASCEND TO WHERE HE IS

A Sermon by St. Aelred of Rievaulx

For some time now, we have been keeping before our minds the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, for the same length of time as he spent in the world after his resurrection. Today we celebrate the day on which he showed us openly that all the things which he did and suffered in this world he did to lead us from the death into which we fell through Adam to true life, and to raise us up from this exile to our homeland for which we were created – that is, to heaven.

He died for our sins, and *he rose for our justification*, and he ascended into heaven for our glorification... That blessedness which we are awaiting... he willed to show forth today in his own person by ascending into heaven. He did this so that we might be certain that we, who are his members, may ascend to where he, who is our head, has ascended.

Therefore, dearest brothers, we ought to celebrate this day with great joy because there can be no greater glorification of the human person than what has been shown to us today. This nature of ours, which has been so depraved and degraded that it was even compared to brute animals, as the Prophet says, *Man, when he was in honor, did not understand and became comparable to stupid beasts*. This nature was in our Lord Jesus Christ so exalted that every other creature is beneath it, and even the angels adore it as something beyond them.

As you have often heard, after his resurrection, our Lord willed to remain in this world in bodily form for forty days for many reasons. He wanted to confirm his resurrection and to demonstrate in many ways that he truly rose from the dead in the flesh. Therefore, he often ate and drank with his disciples, and he openly showed them his wounds. And when the Apostle Thomas was unwilling to believe that the other apostles had seen him, he allowed Thomas to touch his side and his hands. By his bodily presence, he wanted to reassure his disciples, grieved beyond measure during his passion and almost in despair, and to prove to them on the authority of the Scriptures that it was necessary for him to die and to rise again. Moreover, he opened for them the meaning of the Scriptures that they might understand them.

Yet – and we should notice this – before his passion and resurrection, he fasted for the same length of time that he chose to be physically with his disciples after the resurrection. By his fasting, he commended to us the value of the physical affliction which we ought to endure in this life. By his physical presence, which he revealed to his own after his resurrection, we can understand the consolation of his utterly sweet presence, which we will experience after our own resurrection. Both were commended to us over the same length of time because it is in the measure to which we bear affliction for Christ in this life that we shall receive consolation in the life to come...

Let it be our sole concern: to remain attached to him *with our whole heart, our whole mind, our whole strength*, recognizing who our Head is, where our Head is. Let us live as befits the members of that Head, with our minds fixed not here where our lower part is, but there where our Head has today ascended, beseeching God, the Father almighty, to deign to give us his grace, so that all the attachment of our devotion may be directed to where our very substance, Jesus Christ our Lord, is with him, with whom he lives and reigns in the unity of the Holy Spirit through all the ages of ages.

Tuesday

HOW JESUS IS HEAVEN TO THE SOUL

A Reflection from The Scale of Perfection by Walter Hilton

What is heaven to a reasoning soul? Surely, nothing other than Jesus, our God. For if heaven is that which is above all things, then God alone is heaven to a man's soul, for he alone is superior to the nature of the soul. Therefore, if grace enables a soul to perceive the divine nature of Jesus, it sees heaven itself, for it sees God...

It is commonly said that a soul shall see God in all things and within itself. It is true that God is in all created things, but not in the way that a kernel is hidden within the shell of a nut, or as a small object is contained within a greater. He is within all things, maintaining and preserving them in being, but he is present in a spiritual way, exercising the power of his own blessed nature and invisible purity. For just as an object that is very precious and pure is laid in a secure place, so by the same analogy, the nature of God, which is supremely precious, pure, and spiritual, utterly unlike any physical nature, is hidden within all things. Anyone who desires to seek God within must therefore forget all material things, for these are exterior; he must cease to consider his own body or even his own soul, and consider the uncreated nature of God who made him, endowed him with life, upholds him, and gives him reason, memory, and love. All these gifts come to him through the power and sovereign grace of God. This must be the soul's course of action when it is touched by grace; otherwise it will be of little use to seek God within itself or in his creation...

The soul that by grace possesses the fullest knowledge of truth has the clearest vision of God... For as the sun reveals itself and all material things to the eye by its own light, so God, who is also truth, reveals himself first to the understanding of the soul, and by this means bestows all the spiritual knowledge that the soul requires. For the prophet says: *Lord, in your light we shall see all light.* That is: we shall see that you are truth by the light of yourself.

In the same way, God is described as fire: *Our God is a consuming fire.* This does not mean that God is the element of fire which heats and consumes physical objects, but that God is love and charity. For just as fire consumes all material objects that can be destroyed by it, so the love of God burns and consumes all sin out of the soul and makes it clean, as fire purifies all kinds of metal. These descriptions and all other material comparisons applied to God in holy scripture must be understood in a spiritual sense, for otherwise they are meaningless. But the reason why such words are employed to describe God is that we are so worldly in our outlook that we cannot speak of God without at first using such expressions. However, when the eyes of the soul are opened by grace, and we are enabled to catch a glimpse of God, then our souls can quite easily interpret these material descriptions in a spiritual sense...

This is the beginning of contemplation, of which St Paul said: *We do not contemplate the things that are seen, but those that are not seen; for the things that are seen are temporal, but those that are not seen are eternal.* It is these things that the soul should aspire to gain, partially indeed in this present life, but fully in the bliss of heaven. For the full bliss and eternal life of the rational soul consist in this vision and knowledge of God. *Father, this is eternal life, that your chosen souls should know you, and Jesus Christ your son, whom you have sent, to be the one true God.*

Wednesday

WHAT TRUE FAITH IS

A Reflection from True Christianity by Johann Arndt

He who believes that Jesus is the Christ is a child of God. Faith is a deep assent and unhesitating trust in God's grace promised in Christ and in the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. It is ignited by the Word of God and the Holy Spirit...

By this deep trust and heartfelt assent, man gives his heart completely and utterly to God, rests in God alone... becomes one spirit with God, receives from him new power, new life, new consolation... This is the new birth that comes from faith in Christ... a certain true assurance of things on which man hopes and a conviction concerning things man does not see. The consolation of living faith becomes powerful in the heart; it convinces the heart, in that one finds in one's soul heavenly goodness, namely, rest and peace in God, so certain and true that one might then die with a happy heart...

Through this power of God, we are once again drawn into God, inclined toward God, transplanted and set in God, taken out of Adam, and as a cursed vine, placed in Christ, the blessed and living vine. Thus, in Christ we possess all his goods and are made righteous in him... Just as once through Adam's fall, through the deception and treachery of the Devil, the seed of the serpent was sowed in man – that is, the evil, satanic pattern of life out of which an evil, poisonous fruit grew – so by God's word and the Holy Spirit faith was sowed in man as a seed of God in which all divine virtues, qualities, and characteristics, in a hidden manner, were contained and grew out to a beautiful and new image of God, to a beautiful and new tree on which the fruits are love, patience, humility, meekness, peace, chastity, righteousness, the new man, and the whole kingdom of God. The true sanctifying faith renews the whole man, purifies the heart, unites with God, makes the heart free from earthly things, hungers and thirsts after righteousness, works love, gives peace, joy, patience, consolation in all suffering, conquers the world, makes children heirs of God and of all heavenly eternal good and co-heirs of Christ...

If we fall in weakness and stumble, God's grace does not fall away if we arise again through true repentance. Christ remains always Christ and the Sanctifier. He may be grasped with weak or with strong faith. Weak faith belongs as much to Christ as strong. Whether a man is weak or strong of faith, he is Christ's own just the same. The grace that is promised is common to all Christians and is eternal. On this, faith must rest, whether it be weak or strong. In his time, God will allow you to come to refreshing, joyous consolation, whether he brings it to your heart in a short time or in a longer period.

Thursday

A CALL TO CHRISTIAN MATURITY IN FAITH

A Reflection taken from a sermon by St. Pope Leo the Great

The Lord's Ascension increased the faith of the infant Church, and this was strengthened by the gift of the Holy Spirit. That faith remained unshaken by chains, imprisonment, exile, hunger, fire, being fed to starved beasts, and the most refined tortures that could be devised. Not only men but boys, not only women but girls as well, shed their lifeblood in this struggle to keep the faith. It is a faith that casted out devils, healed the sick, and raised the dead.

Even the apostles, though they had been strengthened by witnessing many miracles and much teaching by the Lord himself, were afraid by reason of the cruel sufferings of the Lord's passion and couldn't accept his resurrection without hesitation. Yet they made such progress by means of Christ's ascension that they began to find joy in what had terrified them before. They were now able to fix their attention on Christ's divinity and his having gone to sit at the right hand of the Heavenly Father. What was present to their senses no longer hindered them from fixing their attention on the realization that the Son had not left the Father when he descended to the earth, and so neither had he abandoned his disciples when he ascended into heaven.

This was a kind of great spiritual growth. The Son of Man was revealed to them as Son of God in a more perfect way once he had entered into his glory. He was now even more present to them than he had been when he lived among us. A more mature faith enabled them to stretch their minds upward to the Son in his equality with the Father. Contact with Christ's tangible body isn't necessary.

The Lord's glorified body retained its human nature, but the faith of those who believed in him was raised to new heights. They now know that, as the Father's equal, the Only Begotten Son isn't reached physically but by spiritual discernment. We see why the Lord said to Mary Magdalen: "Don't cling to me". In other words, I don't want you to come to me by what you sense, but I want you to wait for something higher. I am preparing you for what surpasses all ordinary knowledge. When I have ascended, you will experience me more perfectly and believe what you now can't see.

While the disciples were watching the Lord ascending into heaven, two angels came to them. "Men of Galilee, why are you standing here gazing into heaven? This Jesus who has been taken from you will come again, in the same way, you saw him leave." By these words, we have all been taught to believe that Jesus Christ will come again, visibly and in the same flesh. He had been served by angels from his birth, and now they assure us that all things are subjected to him. An angel announced Christ's conception to the Blessed Virgin. Angels announced his birth to the shepherds. Now angels tell us that he is Lord and will come again in his full Lordship.

All these things are intended to lead us to believe what tremendous authority he will have at the end of all things. Do you want to accompany him into his heavenly home? Then you must follow the angels and accompany him in ministering to others, especially to our brothers and sisters in faith. That is full maturity in faith.

Friday

CONCERNING THE TRIPLE LOVE OF GOD

From a Sermon by St Bernard of Clairvaux

Love not the world nor the things which are in the world. For all that is in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life, which is not of the Father...Whoever, therefore, will be a friend of this world becomes an enemy of God... Blessed Gregory explains that love itself is knowledge. Love, therefore, is triple, love that excludes that triple worldly passion that is not from the Father. And besides, three times, I believe, Peter was asked by Christ, *Do you love me, do you love me, do you love me?* Perhaps this love about which the Law teaches is also triple: *You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart, and with your whole soul, and with your whole strength.* That is, you shall love sweetly or affectionately, you shall love prudently, you shall love bravely...

Did he not make himself somehow foolish, he who *has delivered his soul unto death and has borne the sins of many...?* Was he not drunk with the wine of charity and unmindful of himself, against the advice of Peter, who said, "Take care for yourself"?... What is more, we have said that this mystery certainly reaches the heart's affectionate love... Therefore, this love counteracts concupiscence of the flesh. For how could carnal sweetness compare to the genuine sweetness of Christ's passion?

However, this sweetness can be deceptive if it lacks prudence. And besides, poison in the honey can be avoided only with difficulty. In that case, prudence must be present, by which we can diligently investigate interior mysteries, so that we may be ready always to satisfy everyone who asks for a reason... Indeed, this earnest soul cannot be curious about worldly matters, saying with the prophet, O how have I loved your Law, O Lord! It is my meditation all day.

The third way is so that each of us loves bravely: to the extent that we cannot be deceived, so also we cannot be compelled; thus, we are prepared to suffer all things for the sake of justice. For everyone knows that the King of heaven did not seek earthly rule and honors, but rejected them instead...

And so it was that Peter was questioned about these three types of love, for earlier he had been found wanting... Though he loved Christ sweetly, as it were, he said, *Far be it from you*, for he loved foolishly. So he also deserved to hear, *Get behind me, Satan, because you understand not the things that are of God...* But on the night in which the Lord was to be handed over, both sweetly and wisely was Peter loving when he said, *Lord, I am ready to go with you both into prison and to death.* But he was not loving bravely, because "He that is fallen low did never firmly stand." *The power from on high* had not yet come, which, once accepted, Peter did not refuse, but using his liberated voice, he said, *You be the judge whether we ought to obey God rather than human beings.*

Is it not fitting that Peter, who was put in charge of feeding the flock, was asked to give an account of his love? For one who is intoxicated and burning with the wine of charity should lead others, unmindful of himself, so that he *seeks not things that are his own but rather things that are Jesus Christ's.* And note that when Peter was asked if he loved more than these others, he only answered that he loved. He was upset, for he dared not assert what he had rashly said before. And perhaps for that reason, he was deeply grieved, for he had said before, *Even if all shall be scandalized in you, yet not I.*

Saturday

WHY IT IS GOOD FOR US THAT CHRIST LEAVE US

From a Homily on the Gospel of John by St. Augustine

“I tell you the truth: it is for your own good that I am going away, because unless I go, the Advocate will not come to you. But if I go, I will send Him to you.” Christ dwelt among us in the condition of a servant, as Word made flesh, but he won’t go on loving us with merely natural affection. We aren’t to be content with baby’s milk but must long to grow up fully in Christ. Unless I wean you, Jesus says, you will never have an appetite for adult food. As long as you cling to my bodily presence naturally, you will remain incapable of receiving the Holy Spirit.

Did the Lord mean that it was impossible to send the Holy Spirit while he was still on earth? Of course not! He had never left the dwelling place of the Spirit, nor had he left the Father in such a way as no longer to be with Him. Indeed, we know that Christ himself received the Spirit at his baptism. We know that the Son and the Spirit are inseparable.

The Gospel passage you have just heard means that the disciples couldn’t receive the Holy Spirit as long as they only knew Christ according to the flesh. That is what is behind the assertion by St. Paul, made after he had received the Holy Spirit. Here it is: “Even if we used to think of Christ in a human fashion, we don’t do this anymore.” When we know the incarnate Word spiritually, our knowledge, even of his humanity, becomes more than merely human. This is the lesson the Master wanted to give the disciples: that it was good for them that he was going away. If he didn’t change their way of thinking, the Spirit wouldn’t come to them.

The withdrawal of Christ’s bodily presence from the disciples meant not only that the Holy Spirit would come to them but that the Heavenly Father and the Son would spiritually dwell with them. Christ’s departure didn’t mean that the Holy Spirit would simply take his place. It meant rather that together with Christ, the Spirit would make his home in the hearts of the disciples. If this weren’t so, what would become of our Lord’s promise to be with his disciples always?

Here is another promise: “The Father and I will come to you and make our home with you”. The fact is that the Lord promised to send the Holy Spirit in just this way so he would always be with his disciples. When their purely natural and human affections had become spiritualized – through the Spirit – then they would be capable of the indwelling of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Let this give us hope and courage and confidence.