

The Ascension: Jesus Returns to the Father

“Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and said to them, ‘Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I send 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, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven. And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple blessing God” (Luke 24:45-53).

#R4_2-5



Q. 108. What is the meaning of the Ascension of Christ?

The Ascension of Christ means that Jesus “was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their [the disciples’] sight” (Acts 1:9). His glorified body and soul, which had risen from the dead, now ascended into heaven.

Sacred Scripture

So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. *Mark 16:19*

For commentaries on each question with Cardinal Arinze, Sr. John Vianney and Fr. Straub (in Spanish), see Appendix E.

Catechism of the Catholic Church

667 Jesus Christ, having entered the sanctuary of heaven once and for all, intercedes constantly for us as the mediator who assures us of the permanent outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Summary Prayer

Jesus, in Your risen Body You plainly showed Yourself to Your disciples, and then You were taken up to heaven in their sight to claim for us a share in Your divine life. May we follow You into the new creation, for Your Ascension is our glory and our hope. All praise, glory, and honor be to You now and forever. Amen.

Q. 109. What are the two distinctive aspects of the mystery of the Ascension?

The two distinctive aspects of the mystery of the Ascension are: (1) the fullness of the glorification of Jesus' victorious humanity in heaven and (2) the completion of His visible ministry on earth.

Sacred Scripture

And what is the immeasurable greatness of his power in us who believe, according to the working of his great might which he accomplished in Christ when he raised him from the dead and made him sit at his right hand in the heavenly places. *Ephesians 1:19-20*

In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is he who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things. *Ephesians 4:9-10*

He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory. *1 Timothy 3:16*

Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. *Philippians 2:9-11*

Catechism of the Catholic Church

659 "So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God."¹ Christ's body was glorified at the moment of his Resurrection, as proved by the new and supernatural properties it subsequently and permanently enjoys.² But during the forty days when he eats and drinks familiarly with his disciples and teaches them about the kingdom, his glory remains veiled under the appearance of ordinary humanity.³ Jesus' final apparition ends with the irreversible entry of his humanity into divine glory, symbolized by the cloud and by heaven, where he is seated from that time forward at God's right hand.⁴ Only in a wholly exceptional and unique way would Jesus show himself to Paul "as to one untimely born," in a last apparition that established him as an apostle.⁵

Summary Prayer

Jesus, You ascended into heaven to enter into Your glory. While on earth You always enjoyed the vision of God, but the glory of Your sacred humanity showed forth only at Your Transfiguration and in the Resurrection. When You ascended into heaven, You took Your place as triumphant beside

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Your heavenly Father and are exalted above all other creatures. We rejoice at the glory into which You entered to reign as King of heaven and earth. When the struggle of our lives is over, give us the grace to share Your joy forever in heaven. Amen.

Catechism by Diagram



The Way to Glory. Jesus is the Messiah, God's own Son, Who fulfilled Old Testament prophecy, as He carried out His mission on earth. This was the will of His Father (Triangle, rays). God's way of life has begun among men, and they are called to enter it (road to heaven). Original sin broke all contact with God (dotted line). Jesus is the Way. He became man and was born on this earth (manger). He spent thirty years in a hidden life of prayer and work (hatchet, saw). After three years of preaching God's Kingdom, He offered His life on the Cross (Calvary) for our salvation to deliver us from sin and death (serpent, tree). He rose from the dead and, after forty days, ascended into heaven (monogram).

Q. 110. What has Christ done for us through His Ascension?

Through His Ascension, Christ has claimed for us a participation in His divine life. He has ascended into heaven to prepare a place for us. However, He has not abandoned us here on earth.

For commentaries on each question with Cardinal Arinze, Sr. John Vianney and Fr. Straub (in Spanish), see Appendix E.

Sacred Scripture

Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? *John 14:1-2*

And lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age. *Matthew 28:20*

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788 When his visible presence was taken from them, Jesus did not leave his disciples orphans. He promised to remain with them until the end of time; he sent them his Spirit.¹ As a result communion with Jesus has become, in a way, more intense: "By communicating his Spirit, Christ mystically constitutes as his body those brothers of his who are called together from every nation."²

#E4_7-2



Splendor of Truth

We must first of all show the inviting splendor of that truth which is Jesus Christ himself. In him, who is the Truth (cf. Jn 14:6), man can understand fully and live perfectly, through his good actions, his vocation to freedom in obedience to the divine law summarized in the commandment of love of God and neighbor. (section 83)

Q. 111. How is Christ present with the Church?

Christ is present with the Church through God the Holy Spirit. It is through the Holy Spirit that Christ is present to us in the sacraments, especially in the Holy Eucharist. He is also present in the souls of all who love Him and who are striving to do His Will.

Sacred Scripture

And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, to be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him; you know him, for he dwells with you, and will be in you. I will not leave you desolate; I will come to you. *John 14:16-18*

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Catechism of the Catholic Church

737 The mission of Christ and the Holy Spirit is brought to completion in the Church, which is the Body of Christ and the Temple of the Holy Spirit. This joint mission henceforth brings Christ's faithful to share in his communion with the Father in the Holy Spirit. The Spirit *prepares* men and goes out to them with his grace, in order to draw them to Christ. The Spirit *manifests* the risen Lord to them, recalls his word to them and opens their minds to the understanding of his Death and Resurrection. He *makes present* the mystery of Christ, supremely in the Eucharist, in order to reconcile them, to *bring them into communion* with God, that they may "bear much fruit."¹



#H5-27

Vatican Council II

From the fact of their union with Christ the head flows the laymen's right and duty to be apostles. Inserted as they are in the Mystical Body of Christ by baptism and strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit in confirmation, it is by the Lord himself that they are assigned to the apostolate. If they are consecrated a kingly priesthood and a holy nation (cf. 1 Pet. 2:4-10), it is in order that they may in all their actions offer spiritual sacrifices and bear witness to Christ all the world over. Charity, which is, as it were, the soul of the whole apostolate, is given to them and nourished in them by the sacraments, the Eucharist above all.

The apostolate is lived in faith, hope and charity poured out by the Holy Spirit into the hearts of all the members of the Church. And the precept of charity, which is the Lord's greatest commandment, urges all Christians to work for the glory of God through the coming of his kingdom and for the communication of eternal life to all men, that they may know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent (cf. Jn. 17:3). *Lay People, 3*

Summary Prayer

Jesus, complete the work of Your grace and raise up in our days many apostolic men and women who, imbued with a burning zeal for souls and with true wisdom, will go forth to preach the Gospel to nominal Christians, the unchurched, and the lapsed. Increase the number of devoted missionaries and give to them Your Holy Spirit to guide and direct them. We ask this in Your most powerful and holy Name. Amen.

Doctrine • Moral • Worship Exercise (see Appendix B for answer key)

1. Although Jesus ascended into heaven, He has not abandoned us. Where on earth is He especially present now?

2. Jesus is also present in the souls of those who love Him. How can you make Him more present in your life? Think of specific things that you can do.
3. Through His Ascension, Jesus has prepared a place for us in heaven. Let the thought of this inspire you to carry out faithfully the things that you listed in your previous answer.

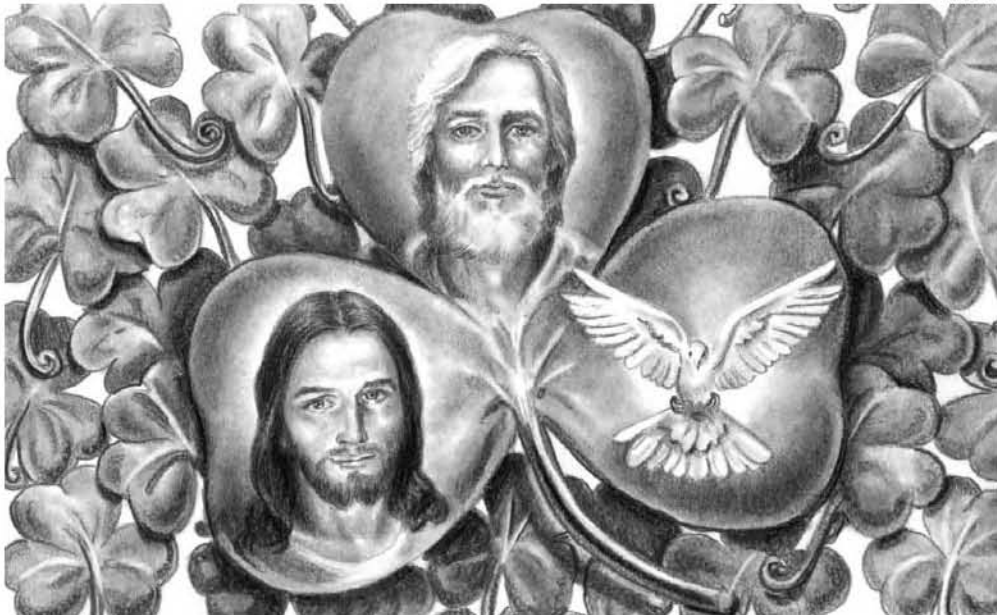
Chapter Summary Prayer

Jesus, we believe in the mystery of the most Holy Trinity, that there is one God in three Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, each existing separately and distinctly in the one divine nature.

We believe that because of Your redemption we share, through grace, in the divine nature and have become sons of God by adoption. We are Your younger brothers and sisters, so we belong to Your family and have God as our Father.

Since You have promised to be with Your Church until the end of the world, the Church is infallible in doctrinal and moral matters. Because You are with her and support her, she cannot err in her office as teacher and interpreter of Your revelation. We thank You for the glorious blessings and privileges which You have conferred upon Your Church to assure our salvation. Fill our hearts with gratitude for the benefits of our Catholic faith. Give us respect for, and submission to the ecclesiastical hierarchy, which is invested with such glorious and truly divine power. We ask this in Your all-glorious and all-holy Name. Amen.

#T3-27



Family Wisdom Library: Chapter 30

See Appendix A for more references.

Q. 108. What is the meaning of the Ascension of Christ?

Sacrosanctum Concilium (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy), Vatican II, sect. 5.

Q. 109. What are the two distinctive aspects of the mystery of the Ascension?

Sacrosanctum Concilium (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy), Vatican II, sect. 5.

Q. 110. What has Christ done for us through His Ascension?

Sacrosanctum Concilium (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy), Vatican II, sect. 5.

Q. 111. How is Christ present with the Church?

Lumen Gentium (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church), Vatican II, sect. 3;

Gospel of Life, John Paul II, sect. 84;

On the Holy Spirit in the Life of the Church and the World, John Paul II, sect. 61-64;

On the Mystery and Worship of the Eucharist, John Paul II, sect. 3;

On Reconciliation and Penance, John Paul II, sect. 24.



Thought Provokers

Please see Appendix C for the answers.

Q. 108: What relationship does the Ascension have with the Resurrection?

Q. 109: What does Jesus' Ascension (body and soul) into Heaven tell us about human destiny?

Q. 110: Weren't the Apostles and other disciples of Jesus privileged since they knew Him while he was on earth?

Q. 111: In addition to the Holy Eucharist, what are some other ways in which Christ is present in His Church?
