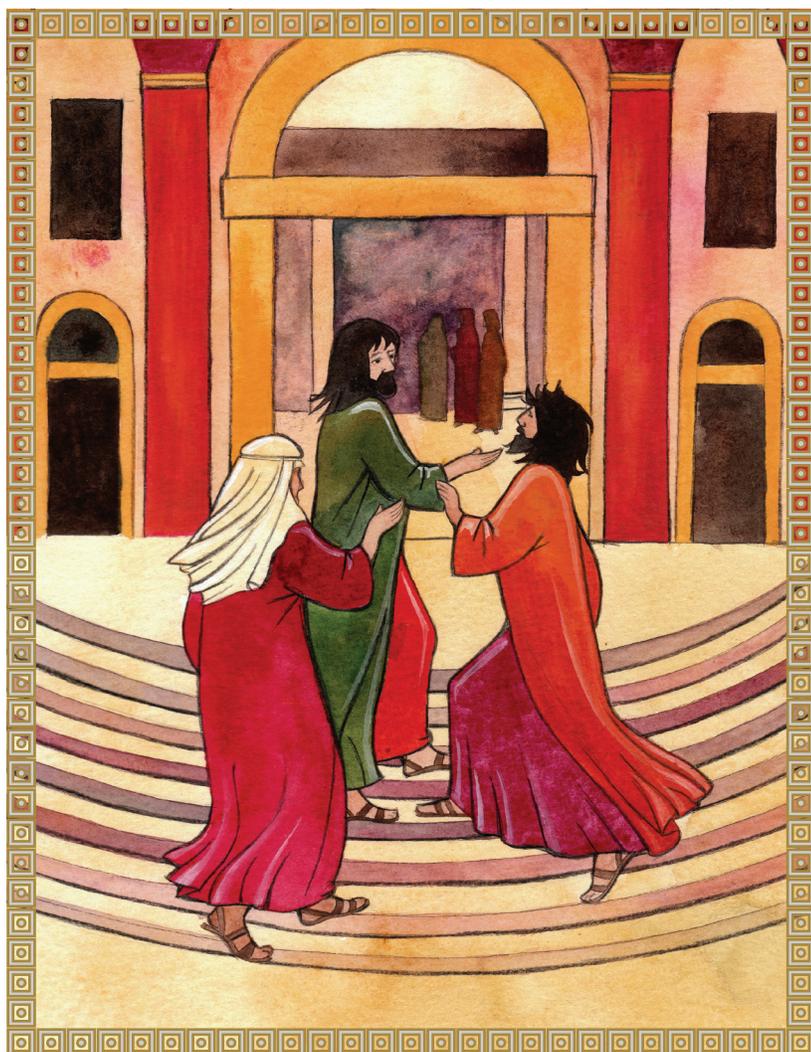


Ascension of the Lord



Make Us Witnesses

Good and gracious God,
you who promised us the
power of the Holy Spirit
to make us witnesses
throughout the world,
renew that power in us.
Make us eloquent when
we speak of your Kingdom,
and convincing in our deeds.
Trusting in you to fulfill

your promises
and looking forward to your reign,
we ask this through our Lord,
Jesus Christ,
your Son, who lives and reigns
with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, forever and ever. Amen.

Sunday, May 12, 2013 Waiting for the Spirit

Today's Readings: Acts 1:1–11; Psalm 47:2–3, 6–7, 8–9 (6); Ephesians 1:17–23; Luke 24:46–53. A spinal stretch, which many people find helpful for crotchety back pain, is to stand erect, reaching fingers high towards the sky while pushing toes deep down towards the earth. In other words, the spine reaches in two directions, which helps it feel long and healthy. It isn't contorted in the hunched posture many of us favor while we bend over the car's steering wheel, the kitchen counter, or the computer keyboard. Instead the elongated spinal column reaches tall and proud, as God designed it to be.

If it's not too much of a stretch (kindly forgiving the pun), think of that posture as a metaphor for today's Gospel. Jesus is tenderly concerned with the earth, sending his

disciples to preach forgiveness in nations not even envisioned at the time. (Who knew then about Brazil, Canada, or Sri Lanka?) Furthermore, knowing the earthly limitations of his friends, he promises to clothe them with power for the tasks ahead.

From the evangelists' perspective, Jesus rises *up*. Today we might phrase it differently. Knowing his presence everywhere, Jesus rises *into* the gathered disciples. Indeed, the marks of his power in them are immediately obvious. They "returned to Jerusalem with great joy" (24:52). Not worrying or complaining, they praise God. Empowered by Jesus's confidence in commissioning them, they seem to have shed their earlier fear and confusion. They wait, tall and expectant, for the Spirit.



This Week at Home

Monday, May 13

Our Lady of Fatima

How appropriate that a Marian feast should come the day after Mother's Day! This memorial commemorates Mary's appearances to three Portuguese shepherd children. In addition to expressing gratitude for the nurturing women in our lives, it's traditional to create a home altar, with a statue or icon of Mary, surrounded by spring flowers. Play or sing a Marian hymn such as "Gentle Woman," "Immaculate Mary," the "Magnificat," or "Ave Maria" as you gather there. Today's Readings: Acts 19:1–8; Psalm 68:2–3ab, 4–5acd, 6–7ab (33a); John 16:29–33.

Tuesday, May 14

St. Matthias

Matthias was chosen by lot because the other disciples wanted to replace Judas in their company. Little is known about him, but what was true for him is also true for us: "You did not choose me but I chose you" (John 15:16). We are *all* unlikely candidates, called by our Lord to help build God's reign on earth. Today's Readings: Acts 1:15–17, 20–26; Psalm 68:10–11, 20–21 (33a); John 15:9–17.

Wednesday, May 15

St. Isidore

Saints Isidore and his wife Maria are patrons of farmers. In their honor, read about the many difficult issues confronting those who farm the land at the website of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference: www.ncrlc.com. Among these are: an aging, decreasing population, hard physical work, increasing farm sizes, industrialization of food production, and difficulty finding fair prices for their products. Then become active: patronize a farmer's market, watch the documentary "Forks over Knives," buy fair trade products, or prepare and enjoy a healthy meal based entirely on plants. Such

actions, along with eating locally grown food whenever possible, help us understand the group's motto, "eating is a moral act." Today's Readings: Acts 20:28–38; Psalm 68:29–30, 33–35a, 35bc–36ab (33a); John 17:11b–19.

Thursday, May 16

Paul's Brilliance

In today's passage from Acts, Paul cleverly plays on disagreements between Sadducees and Pharisees to escape the angry crowd. The first group denied life after death; the second believed in it. Paul diverts the anger initially directed at him so that the two groups debate each other. What situation do you face that may inspire a tangle of wits, not muscles, brain not brawn? Today's Readings: Acts 22:30; 23:6–11; Psalm 16:1–2a and 5, 7–8, 9–10, 11 (1); John 17:20–26.

Friday, May 17

A Perplexing Prisoner

In today's passage from Acts we listen in on Roman officials trying to make sense of the Jews' complaints against Paul—complaints arising from Paul's preaching in Jerusalem. Jesus, during his Passion, was also poised between the Jews and the Romans. Now Paul, the faithful Apostle, seems to be following the Lord's path. Today's Readings: Acts 25:13b–21; Psalm 103:1–2, 11–12, 19–20ab (19a); John 21:15–19.

Saturday, May 18

St. John I, Pope and Martyr

Pope John I suffered death in 526 when trying to mediate between the Arian King of Italy and the Emperor of Constantinople during the raging Arian heresy. Today John the Evangelist concludes his Gospel account by saying the world itself could not contain the books if everything Jesus did were written down. Our stories may seem less dramatic, but we are living out our own encounters with the divine. Today's Readings: Acts 28:16–20, 30–31; Psalm 11:4, 5, and 7 (see 7b); John 21:20–25.

