



LEARN

The Ascension is the last of the appearances of the Risen Jesus to his disciples.

The appearances express the glorified existence of the Risen Jesus, not now confined by time and space.

Jesus' promise to be with his disciples is the fulfilment of the symbolic name *Immanuel* given to him at the beginning of Matthew's Gospel account.



Tiled mosaic of the Ascension in All Saints Church, London, designed by Butterfield and painted by Alexander Gibbs

The Gospel passage for today is the final paragraph of Matthew's version of the Good News. The eleven remaining disciples have returned to Galilee as instructed by the message given to the women by the angel at the tomb and by the risen Jesus himself.

This is the final appearance of Jesus in which he reveals himself in his glorified state to his followers. But there is no goodbye: rather, with the authority now granted him, he commissions his disciples to continue his mission throughout the world. The Gospel ends with an echo of the angel's message in the dream to Joseph: "They will call him Immanuel, a name which means 'God-is-with-us'"; this is fulfilled in the promise of the risen Jesus, "Know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time." Thus the Gospel ends, not with the departure of Jesus, but with the promise of his continuing presence. ■

DO

Look up at the sky. Think of the words of the angels to the disciples, "Why are you standing here looking into the sky?" Where do you imagine Jesus to be today?



REFLECT

The title for today's reflection comes from an article by the abbot of an English Cistercian monastery in which he considers how the journey of the first astronauts to the moon changed our understanding of the Ascension of Jesus. Once human beings had travelled into space, the idea of Jesus literally going up beyond the clouds became even more difficult to sustain than perhaps it had been before.

This year, the Gospel passage from Matthew does not relate the dramatic departure of Jesus as does Luke. But we might note that Luke gives us two distinct accounts of the same event: at the end of the Gospel, on the evening of Easter day, Jesus took the disciples to the outskirts of Bethany, blessed them, withdrew from them and was carried up to heaven. According to the beginning of the Acts of the Apostles, composed by the same writer, 40 days later Jesus was lifted up while they looked on, and a cloud took him from their sight. This gives us a clue that Luke wants us to understand

the Ascension not so much as a literal historical event, but as emphasising Jesus' altered state by virtue of the Paschal (or Easter) Mystery. The cloud in the Bible is often a symbol of the divine presence, so the theme being presented is that Jesus is now living in the presence of the Lord.

Abbot Erik comments that the (lunar) mission was a scientific triumph, but for our theological imagination, it was a disaster. But was it? All Gospel stories are to some degree symbolic: the author wants us to penetrate beyond the literal meaning and see the deeper implications for our own lives as well as telling us something about the person of Jesus. If the exploration of space has made us rethink the meaning of the Ascension of Jesus, then it has done us a positive service. Perhaps we need to think more about Matthew's ending and the continuing presence of Jesus with us in our world than imagining that Jesus has left us and gone elsewhere: he is God-with-us, here and now! ■

SAY

**I am with you always,
yes, to the end of time**

(Matthew 28:20)

REFERENCE: Erik Varden, *The Tablet*, May 25, 2020, 6-7.

PARISH OF DROMORE

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Diocesan Safeguarding Officer: Patricia Carville 07789 917741

Ascension of the Lord

24th May 2020

Broadcast Masses on Facebook

Starting on Sunday 10 May, mass will be broadcast live on our Facebook page at 9.45 (Ballela) and 11.00 (Dromore) – Join us!

www.facebook.com/stcolmans

Anniversaries will continue to be offered at the Sunday and private weekday masses (Tues, Thurs and Fri).

Pentecost Vigil

On the evening of Saturday 30th May, a vigil of readings and prayers will be broadcast from St Colman's, starting at 8.00pm, in anticipation of Pentecost. Join us from your 'upper room' as we pray for the unifying gift of the Spirit this Pentecost.

Ballela Anniversaries

Sun 24 – Johnnie Doyle; Dan and Sadie McCusker
Sun 31 - none

Dromore Anniversaries

Sun 24 – Jack & Jim Moreland
Sun 31 – Sarah Tugwell (Month's mind)
James McGreevy



To conclude Laudato Si Week, we are invited to join with Pope Francis in a global moment of prayer at noon on Sunday 24th May. We will do so as a parish community at the conclusion of the 11.00 am mass broadcast from St Colman's. The special prayer is to be found on the final page of this bulletin.

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Update on the closure of our churches

In response to the revision of the restrictions announced this week, the parish has conducted a risk assessment to consider the opening of our churches for individual prayer. The following points were considered:

- It was not our previous practice to open the churches for extended lengths of time (Ballela)
- St Colman's have one entrance which mitigates against creating a 'one-way' route for visits with an entrance and exit door
- Our church cleaners are volunteers, elderly and not available for the daily cleaning of surfaces that opening would require

The churches therefore will not be opened at this time, but the matter will be kept under review.

The following actions continue in this parish:

- All celebrations (except funerals) are suspended.
- You can participate online in the celebration of Mass from several local churches via: www.incamedia.tv/cameras/county/northern-ireland
- The parish office is closed but we will still respond to phone calls.

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Trócaire Boxes- UPDATE

While we are facing challenging times, we remember those communities across the world that are supported by Trócaire. Trócaire needs our help more than ever. Trócaire advises that parishioners donate online at

<https://www.trocaire.org/donate/make-a-donation>

If you have not done so, please use this online facility to pass on the money collected in your Trocaire box.

If you are unable to donate online, please contact the parochial house for assistance in passing the money to Trocaire.



**COVID-19
COUPLES & RELATIONSHIPS
SUPPORT LINE**



**IF YOU NEED TO SPEAK TO AN
EXPERIENCED COUPLES &
RELATIONSHIPS COUNSELLOR
DURING THIS TIME OF
UNPRECEDENTED STRESS AND
PRESSURE ON FAMILY LIFE...**

Contact:

028 9568 0151 003531 531 3331

9.00 am - 8.00 pm, Monday to Friday

All calls charged at local rate.

Donating to the parish

The current health crisis is having a serious impact on donations to many charities. The Diocese has set up an online donation facility on the home page of the diocesan website (www.dromorediocese.com) where you can donate to this parish or to clergy support, once or on a monthly basis.

In line with the government's 'Stay at Home' and social distancing policies, parish envelopes will not be collected at this time. Parishioners who choose to use their weekly envelopes as normal, should retain their envelopes and, once Government policy allows, the parish will arrange to safely collect them.

Letter of His Holiness Pope Francis to the Faithful for the Month of May 2020

The month of May is a time when the People of God express with particular intensity their love and devotion for the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is traditional in this month to pray the Rosary at home within the family. The restrictions of the pandemic have made us come to appreciate all the more this "family" aspect, also from a spiritual point of view. For this reason, I want to encourage everyone to rediscover the beauty of praying the *Rosary* at home in the month of May. This can be done either as a group or individually; you can decide according to your own situations, making the most of both opportunities. The key to doing this is always simplicity, and it is easy also on the internet to find good models of prayers to follow. I am also providing two prayers to Our Lady that you can recite at the end of the *Rosary*, and that I myself will pray in the month of May, in spiritual union with all of you.

FRANCIS

We fly to your protection, O Holy Mother of God; Do not despise our petitions in our necessities, but deliver us always from every danger, O Glorious and Blessed Virgin

O Mary,
You shine continuously on our journey as a sign of salvation and hope.
We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick, who, at the foot of the cross, were united with Jesus' suffering, and persevered in your faith.

"Protectress of the Roman people", you know our needs, and we know that you will provide, so that, as at Cana in Galilee, joy and celebration may return after this time of trial.

Help us, Mother of Divine Love, to conform ourselves to the will of the Father and to do what Jesus tells us. For he took upon himself our suffering, and burdened himself with our sorrows to bring us, through the cross, to the joy of the Resurrection. Amen



COMMON PRAYER

for the 5th anniversary of
Laudato Si'

Loving God,

Creator of heaven and earth and all that is in them,
You created us in your own image and made us
stewards of all your creation.

You blessed us with the sun, water and bountiful land
so that all might be nourished.

Open our minds and touch our hearts,
so that we may attend to your gift of creation.

Help us to be conscious that our common home
belongs not only to us, but to all of your creatures and to
all future generations, and that it is our responsibility to
preserve it.

May we help each person secure the food and
resources that they need.

Be present to those in need in these trying times,
especially the poorest and those most at risk of being
left behind.

Transform our fear and feelings of isolation into hope
and fraternity so that we may experience a true
conversion of the heart.

Help us to show creative solidarity in addressing the
consequences of this global pandemic,

Make us courageous to embrace the changes that are
needed in search of the common good,

Now more than ever may we feel that we are all
interconnected and interdependent,

Enable us to listen and respond to the cry of the earth
and the cry of the poor.

May the present sufferings be the birth pangs of a more
fraternal and sustainable world.

Under the loving gaze of Mary Help of Christians, we
make this prayer through Christ our Lord.

Amen



**LAUDATO SI'
WEEK 2020**



DICASTERO PER IL SERVIZIO
DELLO SVILUPPO UMANO INTEGRALE