

CELTIC EVENING PRAYER
for
ASCENSION DAY



We light this candle because Christ is the Light no darkness can extinguish



*In the name of the Father who fosters.
In the name of the Son who frees.
In the name of the Spirit who freshens.
In the name of the Sacred Three.*

**We welcome you, Lord :
into our home, into our heart.
Open us now to your Truth.
Fill us with your wisdom, love and peace.
Amen.**

WE PRAY

Jesus, you embraced our humanity and
took it into the heart of God.

Alleluia!

You clothe human life in unfading dignity.

Alleluia!

Help us Lord to revere you in all we do,
to discern you in every place
and love you in each person we meet.

Alleluia!

Amen

SCRIPTURE

Acts 1 : 1-11



In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptised with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

Then they gathered around him and asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them : ‘Men of Galilee, - why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.’

REFLECTION

Ascension Day is what could be described as Act 4 of God's 5 Act Drama of Salvation : Act 1: the birth of Jesus. Act 2: the death of Jesus. Act 3: the resurrection of Jesus and Act 4: the ascension of Jesus. The fifth Act is the one predicted by the angels in our scripture reading : the return of Jesus – and no-one but the Father knows when that will be. Ascension Day tends to be the least celebrated 'Act', but it remains, nonetheless, an essential part of God's saving work.

The picture below shows an ancient Christian symbol – the cross surrounded by Greek letters. The top 4 spell 'Jesus' and the bottom 4, 'Nika' – meaning victory. Nike is probably the best known sports brand in the world and sponsors many events. When a football team wins a championship, we hear the supporters shouting 'we won the cup' – and yet, they've never touched the ball! It's a corporate victory in which they share – others have won it on their behalf - and so it is with us. We have celebrated victory at Easter – with Jesus' resurrection, he defeated the greatest enemy of all – death. But it was at Ascension that he returned to the Father to receive the cup of Easter triumph. We who believe in him, who follow him, can also say 'we've won. We share in that triumph and the promise of eternal life in the heart of heaven.



The wonderful truth about Ascension is that Jesus, who was fully human and fully divine, took his humanity – and with it our humanity – into heaven, opening the Kingdom of heaven to all believers. In the mystery of the Ascension, we reflect on how, in order to do this, Christ leaves us – but, by leaving us in bodily form, he has given himself to us and to the world in a new and universal way. He's no longer located in space and time – he is universally accessible to all who call on him. Jesus – Emmanuel – God with us – for all eternity. **Alleluia!**

WE PRAY

Risen, ascended Lord,
you came down
to lift us up

You descended to earth
that earth might ascend to heaven

You descended to the dead
that the dead might rise to life

In our struggles
lift us up

In our tiredness
lift us up

Lift us Lord
**out of darkness into light,
out of despair into hope**

Lift us Lord
**out of sadness into joy,
out of failure into trust**

Lift us Lord
**out of anger into forgiveness
out of pride into humility**

Lift us Lord
**out of doubt into faith
out of loneliness into community**

Lift us Lord
**out of death into life.
Lift us into your heart
to be with you for all eternity.
Amen.**



(Adapted from Liturgies from Lindisfarne)

OUR PRAYERS FOR THE WORLD



Lord Jesus Christ, Ruler and Servant of all, we thank you that no-one is outside your love, whoever they may be, wherever they may be, whatever they may have done and we bring before you now the needs of the world you created:

We pray for the rulers of the world, as they seek a way forward through this pandemic. Give them wisdom to balance economic and safety concerns. May they serve their people, putting aside party politics and personal ambition.

Lord, in your mercy Hear our prayer

We continue to remember all medical staff, carers, and all those who serve others in so many ways. We give thanks and pray protection for the staff of our surgery in Marazion and in our local hospitals. We name before you those we carry on our hearts today

Lord, in your mercy Hear our prayer

We pray your blessing on charities, grant them the workers and funds to continue unabated. We think of the foodbanks, the homeless projects, child welfare organisations, those involved in overseas aid and animal charities.

Lord, in your mercy Hear our prayer

We pray for all teachers, schoolchildren and students : Keep them safe in the event of schools re-opening and bless all new pathways of learning.

Lord, in your mercy Hear our prayer

Reach out to all whose belief in the future has been destroyed. For all who have lost their jobs, who fear losing their homes and who are losing hope. Grant them support when there seems to be nothing to hold on to and new dreams where the old have died.

Lord, in your mercy Hear our prayer

We remember all who are suffering in body, mind or spirit and pray your healing on those we name before you now

Lord, in your mercy Hear our prayer

Grant, we pray, eternal rest to those who have died and comfort to those who mourn.

Lord, in your mercy Hear our prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, we thank you that your love has transformed lives in every country, crossing barriers of culture, colour and creed, unable to be contained by space or time. It is in your Holy Name that we humbly offer these, our prayers. Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be Thy name.
Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done,
on earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day, our daily bread
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil;
for Thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. **Amen.**

BLESSING

May the Eternal Glory shine upon us.
May the Son of Mary stay beside us.
May the life-giving Spirit work within us.
And until we meet again,
may God keep us in the palm of his hand.

Amen.

