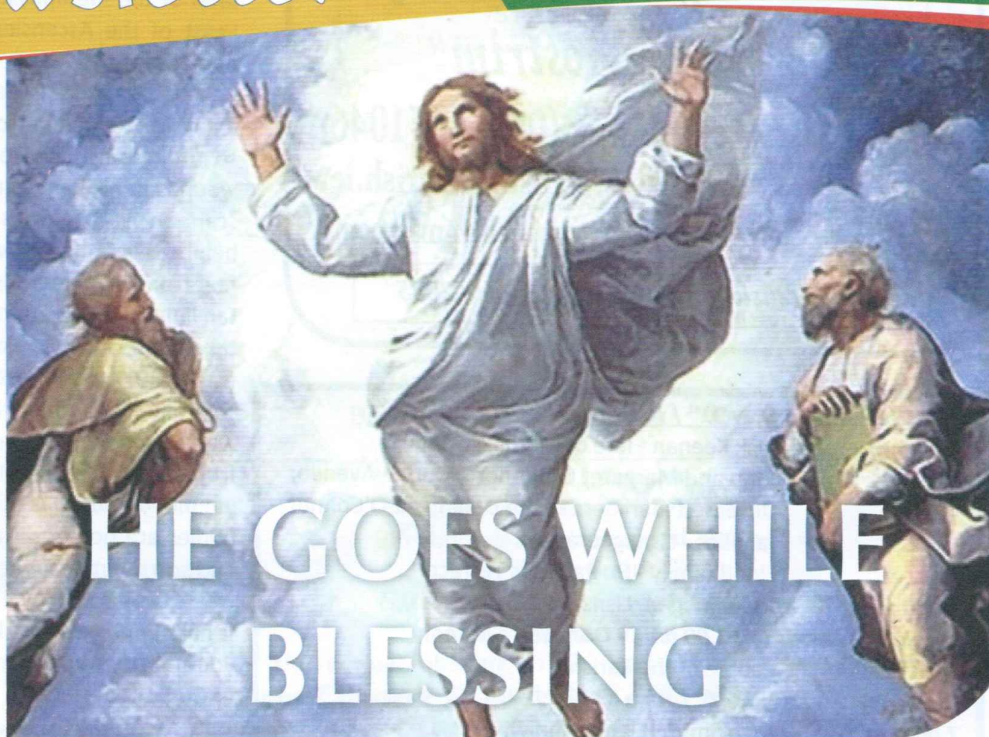


It may come as a surprise to know that whereas in his Gospel St John implies that Jesus ascended into heaven on Easter Sunday, the Gospels of Mark and Luke and the Acts of the Apostles maintain that it occurred some forty days after the resurrection. In Luke 24:50 we are told that before he returned to be with his Father Jesus, 'raised his hands, and blessed them. As he blessed them, he parted from them and was taken up to heaven.' Commenting on this event in volume two of his *Jesus of Nazareth*, Pope Benedict XVI said, 'Jesus departs in the act of blessing. He goes while blessing, and he remains in the gesture of blessing. 'In the Bible, the word to bless means to bestow goodness or favour. God the Father is benevolent and wants to shower down blessings on all people, especially on those like you and me who believe in him. Arguably, those graces and blessings are dispensed as a result of trust in the God of the promises and the promises of God.'

There is no need to be afraid as a result of cost-of-living issues such as paying the mortgage or rent and what you can afford to eat, drink or wear. 'The Gentiles seek after all these things and your heavenly Father



knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added to you' (Mt 6:32-33). St Paul added, 'seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above not on things on the earth.' (Col 3:1-2). So, 'when the outlook is bad try looking upward!'

Not only, does God bless believers, he also wants them to become agents of blessing for other people. There are many ways of doing this, of course, but on the feast of the Ascension we

need to underline the primary importance of sharing the good news about Jesus, his love, mercy and myriad blessings with all who desire to accept him as their Lord and Saviour. That is why the Gospel says that the message should be 'preached in his name to all the nations'. That begins with one-to-one sharing of your faith story with others, what you were like before you encountered Jesus, how the encounter took place, and its effects in your life. ■

— Tom Cox

exchange we, too, may rise up to the heavenly realms.

Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord be with you. **And with your spirit.**
Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to the Lord.**
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

Sanctus **It is right and just.**

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. ...

After the Consecration

The mystery of faith.

We proclaim your Death, O Lord,
and profess your Resurrection
until you come again.

THE COMMUNION RITE

At the Saviour's command ...

Our Father, who art in heaven, ...

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil, ...

For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and for ever.

Lord Jesus Christ, ...

Amen.

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And with your spirit.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins ...

Behold the Lamb of God, ...

Lord, I am not worthy ...

Communion Antiphon

(Mt 28:20)

Behold, I am with you always,
even to the end of the age, alleluia.

Prayer after Communion

Almighty ever-living God, who allow those on earth to celebrate divine mysteries, grant, we pray, that Christian hope may draw us onward to where our nature is united with you.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.



Reflection

Feel the mystery and power in the appearance of Jesus, now transformed with divine glory.



Lesson

Jesus' ascension means our salvation.



Prayer

Jesus, may we always be glad when we think of the many ways you are with us: in the Eucharist, in your Word, in one another and in your ministers.

