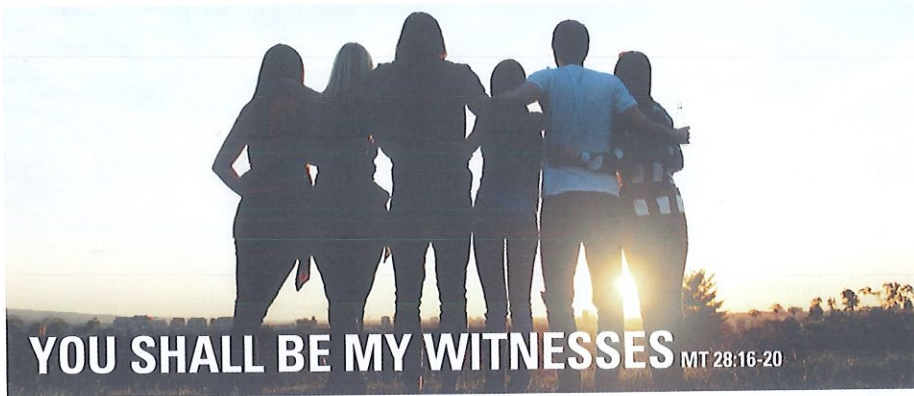


Sunday Message

THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD

THE WORD

Year A • 21 May 2023 • Colour: White • Psalter Week 3



Today we celebrate the feast of the Ascension. Jesus has gone to his father in heaven, and the disciples feel his absence. They are alone again.

We can only imagine what it must have been like for them to experience the joy of the resurrection - having the risen Jesus back with them, though different in form - and then to experience his absence once more when he leaves them to ascend to heaven. Even though he promises to send them the Holy Spirit, they might well have sung with Gilbert O'Sullivan: "Alone again, naturally."

The period between Ascension and Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit will come, is called the in-between time. At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit will descend on the disciples to strengthen them and fill them with a powerful sense of God's presence. But meanwhile, they find themselves all alone.

It can feel the same for us. There are times when we feel as if God is not with us. Ours is a broken world plagued by all kinds of suffering, injustice, violence, and pain. None of us escapes the harsh reality of the human condition.

But the promise Jesus made to his disciples is true: God has not abandoned God's people. God is with us. The Holy Spirit is with us. The Second Vatican Council says that the Church, and all the People of God, are imbued with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit gives us the strength to cope with the difficulties that come our way and the courage to witness to the Gospel. ■

REFLECT

What do you think of when you hear the word 'witness'? Maybe, like me, you think of courts and court cases. Witnesses are important in court cases. Barristers love when they have a powerful witness on their side. The evidence of a credible witness can make all the difference.

The readings for the feast of the Ascension speak about being a witness, though not in the legal sense. Jesus is about to return to his heavenly Father. In his final pep talk to his disciples, he promises them the gift of the Holy Spirit. This gift will enable them to be his witnesses. They will witness to him, from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth.

And that is what they did. They witnessed to the Risen Lord, beginning from Jerusalem. We wouldn't be here today if they had not heeded Jesus's instruction. Christianity would have remained just

another minor religious sect. We are called to follow the example of those first Christians by bearing witness to Jesus in our time and place.

There are several definitions of the word witness. To witness is to see, hear, experience something in the flesh; to personally see, hear, smell, sense, savour it. To witness is to experience personally. It's one thing to hear about the atmosphere in Anfield when Liverpool is on a roll, but I know what the atmosphere is like because I've been there and felt it for myself. I have been on the Sea of Galilee and experienced its tranquility and power. I have been to St Peter's in Rome and marvelled at its majesty. My breath has been cut short by the splendour of the Grand Canyon.

To witness is to give evidence. The most powerful evidence in a court of law, outside of DNA or a smoking gun, is eyewitness testimony. Circumstantial evidence is less powerful in proving a case than a living,

LEARN

As Christians, we are called to be the face of Christ to all we meet

No matter how difficult life might be for us at times, we know that God is with us. We can be sure of God's promises

PRAY

We live in a world where there is so much violence, tragedy, and pain that it can be hard to believe in God's presence with us. Pray this week for an increase of faith.

SAY

"Lord, help me to be an effective witness to you. Amen."

DO

We can be embarrassed these days to talk openly about our faith. Be bold this week. Speak to someone about Jesus and your faith in him.



breathing, sentient witness, someone who was there, who heard, who saw.

To witness is also to demonstrate by example, to model a way of behaviour. If I want to show my children the value of books, I will read to them, let them see me -reading, surround them with books. If I want them to appreciate the importance of hard work, I will try to demonstrate it. It's the same with prayer. Bearing personal witness is the most authentic testimony of all.

That's what Jesus asked his followers to do before he left them. It's what he asks of us, too. We are to bear witness to our faith in Jesus and our personal experience of him. To bear witness to Jesus is to speak about him to everyone whose lives touch ours. To demonstrate his values, show his love. What do people see when they see me? What do they encounter when they encounter me? Do they hear the Holy Spirit speak in my heart? ■



NEWSLETTER

MAY 21ST. THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD.

A PARISH OF THE MULLINGAR DEANERY

Fr. Stan Deegan Tel: 044-9374127 0872673655.

Email: parishofkillucan@gmail.com

Streaming; <https://www.churchservices.tv/raharney>

www.parishofkillucan.ie Facebook: Killucan Parish

The Community of St. Camillus 044 9374115.

ST. JOSEPH'S, RATHWIRE.

Saturday 20th, 6pm. Paddy & Margaret Hill & Imelda Hill Judge.


Sunday 21st, 11.30am. Mary Kenny & family. Eddie Deihy. Mary Bowe & dec.d family.

Sunday 28th, 11.30am. Owen Gilsean MM. Dec.d members of the Geraghty family.

ST. BRIGID'S, RAHARNEY.

Sunday 28th, 10am. Ellen Dowdall..

Weekday Masses; Tuesday & Thursday, Raharney 9am. Wednesday & Friday Rathwire 9am.

<p>Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament</p> 	<p>In St. Joseph's Tuesday 1pm-9pm. & St. Brigid's Wed. 5pm-10pm: <i>Special Diocesan intention of prayer for vocations and the family.</i> Take one Hour with the Lord</p>
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MASS OFFERTORY COLLECTION: €490
PARISH DEVELOPMENT FUND €580

Mary Greville, Hyde Park.

Cemetery Sunday; on June 18th at 3pm.

May Rosary; each Friday at the grotto in Raharney at 7pm.

Trad Session; in Ennis' Lounge on Tues 23rd at 8.30pm. All welcome. Refreshments served.

Mass with prayers for Healing; this Thurs in St. Camillus church at 8pm.

Accord Mullingar are currently recruiting Marriage Education Facilitators who will deliver a one day course to those preparing for marriage. This is an interesting and fulfilling role which may suit someone who has an interest in this area. Full training will be provided later this year, and no previous experience is necessary. If you are interested in the dynamics of relationships and marriage and think that you would enjoy this role, please contact the Accord Office on 044-9348707. Recruitment will take place in June 2022.

The Mission in the World

Having ascended into heaven, Jesus can now say that "I am in the world no more, but these are in the world." He is not physically present in the world the way he was in the first third of the first century. It is now up to us to deal with the world.

During the period dominated by Trent and Vatican I, the Catholic Church was defensive in its approach to the world, which was regarded as an occasion of sin. Vatican II heralded a new approach based on dialogue rather than confrontation.

The world is viewed not as the enemy but rather as the object of service. This positive approach is much closer to our biblical roots: "I believe that I shall see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living."

"Time is the unfolding of truth that already is." The world and its history are where we encounter the eternal God, "reaching from end to end of the universe." We are not called to abandon the world but to remain in it and to take responsibility for its well ordering. The paschal mystery is a challenge to us to lift the world to the heavens.

Holding faithfully to the gospel and exercising her mission in the world, the Church consolidates peace among men, to God's glory. For it is her task to uncover, cherish, and ennoble all that is true, good, and beautiful in the human community

Vatican II, [Constitution on the Church in the Modern World](#),