

## The Ascension of Our Lord

Today is Thursday the 13 May, the Solemnity of the Ascension of Our Lord.

The choir of Westminster Cathedral sing *Ascendit Deus* by Peter Phillips. A setting of a verse from Psalm 47, "God has gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet. Alleluia!"

We approach the end of the Easter season as Jesus is taken up to heaven to reign forever next to the Father. This is a real turning point – and so it's a great chance to look back over the Easter season, to see what graces you've received, and what you've hoped for, but haven't received. Today's reading is from the Gospel of Mark.

Mark 16:15-20

Jesus said to them, 'Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation. The one who believes and is baptized will be saved; but the one who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: by using my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes in their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover.' So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and proclaimed the good news everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that accompanied it.

After speaking to the disciples for the last time Jesus is taken up into heaven. The disciples then go out and begin the work of proclaiming the Good News. It's an end, but also a beginning. As you pray here now, what is coming to an end for you? Perhaps there have been blessings in this Easter season, things that have happened to you in the last few weeks that you want to thank God for?

And what about beginnings? Maybe I'm being asked to face a new challenge. Maybe you're just being asked to draw a line under the past. Jesus tells the disciples, he tells you, to 'go into all the world'. What do you have to say about what God has done for you? How are you going to speak about it to those in your world?

As you hear the passage a second time, listen carefully to how it ends.



'The Lord worked with them'. You are not alone. Jesus continues to be with the disciples, and with us, through the Holy Spirit. What is God's Spirit making possible in you at this moment? What is the Spirit saying as it leads you out today, as you walk, or stand, or sit here right now?

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.