

# Living the Word

MEDITATING ON THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

Year A - The Ascension

A resource for personal, family  
and community prayer.

“I am with you  
**ALWAYS**”

## Gospel: Matthew 28: 16-20

<sup>16</sup>The eleven disciples set out for Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had arranged to meet them.



“...teach them to observe  
all the commands I gave you.”

You are invited to read the  
Gospel passage attentively,  
respectfully and reverently  
as a gift of God.



<sup>17</sup>When they saw him they fell down before him, though some hesitated. <sup>18</sup>Jesus came up and spoke to them. He said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

<sup>19</sup>Go, therefore, make disciples of all the nations; baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit <sup>20</sup>and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.”

For more information check out <https://lectio.newrydominican.com> which includes this week's Sunday Gospel podcast Living the Word - Meditate on the Way, Pentecost Series.

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## Reading

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Traditionally the feast of the Ascension is celebrated on the Thursday of the sixth week of Easter, the 40th day after Easter. In order to facilitate more participation in the celebration of the feast, in some countries like ours, it has been moved to the following Sunday.

At the Ascension Jesus withdraws (ascends to his Father) and hands over to his disciples the work of promoting the reign of God, with the reassurance that he will always be with them. Jesus is confident that if he steps back a bit the disciples will grow in stature, will take more responsibility and will grow in their own gifts. He is confident that they will blossom in their own creativity and commitment under the influence of the Holy Spirit. They will come to realize the important contribution they have to make and will be given an opportunity to make it.

## Recognising

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**You are invited to meditate on the passage, or any part of it, by letting it speak to your life experience until you feel to say “I recognise this passage.”**

**v17. “When they saw him they fell down before him, though some hesitated.”**

Can you enter into the experience of the disciples by remembering an occasion when you were confronted with a significant “change” in your life and you responded with confusion and hesitancy?

**v19. “Go, therefore, make disciples of all the nations; baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,”**

Can you remember an ‘ascension moment’, when you were leaving home, family, friends, school or workplace - and you spoke similar beautiful words of blessing, of encouragement or inspiration and reassurance for those you were leaving behind? The Gospel ‘blessing’ of Jesus has lived again in you.

**v20. “teach them to observe all the commands I gave you.”**

Can you remember an experience of lovingly withdrawing from some position of responsibility so as to allow others to come to the fore, to discover their own gifts and talents and make their own unique contribution to the work at hand? You reassured them of your constant support and love and, in doing so, the ascension of Jesus has lived again in you.

**v20. “And know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.”**

Can you remember a special reunion or gathering of family, neighbours or old school friends? You were conscious of those who were missing – had moved away or passed on. And even though you felt the loss you were strengthened and sustained by precious memories and the nearness of their love. Jesus’ promise “to be with you always” was fulfilled again.

## Responding

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Having recognised God's presence in life, you are invited to **respond** in your own words, in prayer (thanksgiving, repentance and petition).

I thank you, Father, for the generous love of those who know when and how to step back, and to hand over – “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.” Like your son Jesus, they have allowed me to develop my own gifts and talents and given me freedom to grow and to make my own contribution.

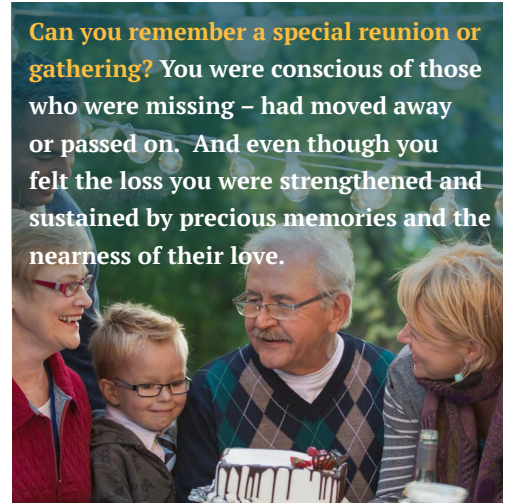
Father, I ask forgiveness for the times that I have been possessive in my relationships or in responsibilities entrusted to me, not knowing when to “withdraw” or how to “bless” and, as a result, I have blocked and frustrated the growth of others. Lord, have mercy.

Father, help us to give of our best until the day arrives when we recognize that others are in a better position to carry on the work. May we pass it on with our blessing “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” and continue to serve you in new ways.

## Resting

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You are invited to enter deep prayer by simply **resting** your heart in God's presence (Contemplative moment). The quiet repetition of a word or phrase from the passage might help you on this journey into greater silence and stillness, e.g. “I am with you always”.



## Reflecting

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From your journey with this passage, you are now invited to **reflect**, and put into your own words, any new insights or understanding that you have received (Wisdom moment).

From your journey with this passage, what new insight has been given to you into the meaning of the following: Love or trust or growth or blessing or hope?  
**Love knows when and how to withdraw for the good of the other.**



# Children

## *Reading*

After Jesus is risen from the dead he meets with his disciples before he ascends to be with God, the Father in heaven. Jesus gives the disciples the responsibility to go out, to baptise and to teach all that they had learned from Jesus about living a life of faith, hope and love. Jesus reassures the disciples by sharing that he will always be with them.

## *Recognising*

Can you remember a time when you were given responsibility, like the disciples, to do a good deed, to share what you had learned from others or to carry on the work started by someone else?

Can you remember a 'Jesus person' - a parent, grandparent or friend- reassuring you that they would always be by your side in the ups and downs of life?

## *Responding*

Father, I thank You for the 'Jesus people' in my life, especially my parents, grandparents

and friends who have been there with me and for me in the moments of joy and pain in life.

Father, I am sorry for the times that I lost sight of my responsibility as a disciple of Jesus to build up a kingdom of faith, hope and love on earth.

Father, I ask that that I may be a person who goes out with faith to remind others that they are loved by You and to always share Your hope with them.

## *Resting*

Rest in the warm embrace of the Father by repeating "I AM WITH YOU" for as long as it is possible. May your heart be filled with new faith, hope and love as you are drawn deeper into the Father's presence.

## *Reflecting*

Go out with the confidence that comes from knowing that the people closest to you want the best for you and will always be there for you.

**A simple summary of Lectio steps can be found in the porch of the church.**