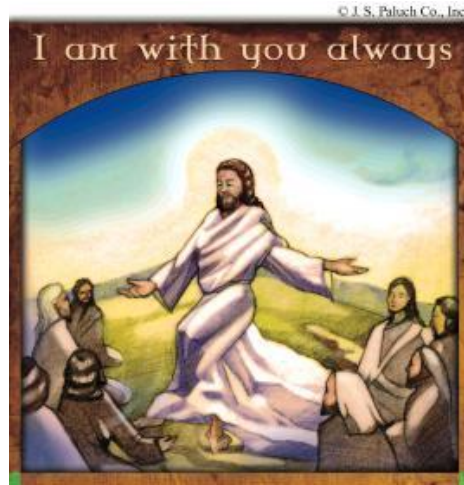


## The Ascension of the Lord May 24, 2020



The key to unlocking the scriptures is in Paul's letter to the Ephesians as we pray, "May the eyes of your hearts be enlightened." People see and hear things but simply have a hard time believing they are true. In our first reading from the very beginning of the Acts of the Apostles, Luke starts where his Gospel left off—the ascension of Jesus. For as long as Jesus spent preparing the disciples, they were still foggy about what was happening, and spent time staring at the sky wondering where he went. In today's Gospel, the disciples still doubt Jesus to the very last minute. In the letter to the Ephesians, Paul speaks to the new Christian community, but could be preaching to each of us in the pews as he says, "I can explain it to you, but I can't make you believe. This is where faith comes in." May we all pray for the gift of enlightenment today!

### HERE IS THE GAME PLAN

When we hear an excerpt from a particular Gospel, it is easy to get the details and stories from all the Gospels all mixed up and combined into one. Theologian Gerhard Lohfink called this "Making Gospel Soup!" To understand today's Gospel passage, we must realize that this is material particular to Matthew and in his telling it takes place right after the Resurrection. There has been no "doubting Thomas" or any of the other stories that we've heard since Easter. How often have you made a plan at an event, saying, "If we get split up, just go back to the car and wait" or "Stay at the fountain in the mall—I'll find you!" Earlier in Matthew, Jesus told the women at the tomb to tell the disciples, "If something happens, head back to Galilee" (28:10). This was the game plan and was both a geographic reference and a spiritual one. "Go back to what you know, what you remember." They were confused and hurting, but did as Jesus said, returning to Galilee, specifically to the mountain where they had a powerful experience with him before. That would make it understandable that the disciples showed up but were a bit leery or doubting.

### YOU'VE GOT THIS

Put yourself in the disciples' shoes. This is May, the season of graduations, new jobs, new cars, marriages, and so many other transitions as young people strike out on their own. Jesus reminded the disciples, "I have the power, and I've been teaching you for three years. Now you have the power. Go. Make Disciples. Baptize in the name of the Trinity. Teach them what I taught you." Surely the disciples were frightened, and Jesus must have felt both fear and pride. This was the moment that happens in every lifetime. It was time for these disciples, these students, his "children" to become the masters. And how did he reassure them? As parents and teachers and mentors have been doing for centuries. He smiled and reminded them, "Behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age." Or as we might say, "You've got this."

Today's Readings: Acts 1:1–11 Ps 47:2–3, 6–7, 8–9; Eph 1:17–23; Mt 28:16–20