

"I am with You Always"

The Ascension of the Lord
Cycle A | May 17, 2026

WISDOM FROM THE CELLS

I remember when I was young, I was always mad at the Lord. Life was unfair, and I blamed God for making it that way. He didn't care about me and ignored my cries. That's exactly how I thought.

I was only a child with so much weight on my shoulders. I couldn't understand how God could stand and watch me crumble over and over again. I suffered many losses and great pain in my life. So, of course, I blamed God for turning his back on me. Why would a loving, compassionate Father allow his beaten son so much agony? I was only a kid. I couldn't take on so much on my own.

The truth is, I was never alone. Those were the thoughts of a child. As a man, I now understand that life is filled with struggles. All of us have our own trials and tribulations in life. I also realize that suffering builds character. We see the value in the simple gestures of life, like a hug, a "good morning," or a simple smile. They can change the course of someone's day. I've been in prison for a few years, with many more to go. I know I felt enough pain and heartache to acknowledge the blessings now. But I didn't make it this far on my own. The good Lord took every step with me.

-Wally, who is in a California State Prison.



PENITENTIAL RITE

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins and bring us to everlasting life.

R. Amen.

OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray:

Lord,

You lived among people and have gone away to the Father's glory. Though we do not see you, help us remember that you are always with us through your Spirit of strength and love. Grant us the peace of your love and forgiveness.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord. **R. Amen.**



LITURGY OF THE WORD

First Reading: Acts 1: 1-11

In the first book, Theophilus, I dealt with all that Jesus did and taught until the day he was taken up, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. He presented himself alive to them by many proofs after he had suffered, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. While meeting with them, he enjoined them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for "the promise of the Father about which you have heard me speak; for John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." When they had gathered together they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" He answered them, "It is not for you to know the times or seasons that the Father has established by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." When he had said this, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him from their sight. While they were looking intently at the sky as he was going, suddenly two men dressed in white garments stood beside them. They said, "Men of Galilee, why are you standing there looking at the sky? This Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven will return in the same way as you have seen him going into heaven."

The Word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 47: 2-3, 6-7, 8-9

R. God mounts his throne to shouts of joy: a blare of trumpets for the Lord.

All you peoples, clap your hands,
shout to God with cries of gladness,
For the LORD, the Most High, the awesome,
is the great king over all the earth.

R. God mounts his throne to shouts of joy: a blare of trumpets for the Lord.

God mounts his throne amid shouts of joy;
the LORD, amid trumpet blasts.
Sing praise to God, sing praise;
sing praise to our king, sing praise.

R. God mounts his throne to shouts of joy: a blare of trumpets for the Lord.

For king of all the earth is God;
sing hymns of praise.
God reigns over the nations,
God sits upon his holy throne.

R. God mounts his throne to shouts of joy: a blare of trumpets for the Lord.

Second Reading: Ephesians 1: 17-23

Brothers and sisters: May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give you a Spirit of wisdom and revelation resulting in knowledge of him. May the eyes of your hearts be enlightened, that you may know what is the hope that belongs to his call, what are the riches of glory in his inheritance among the holy ones, and what is the surpassing greatness of his power for us who believe, in accord with the exercise of his great might, which he worked in Christ, raising him from the dead and seating him at his right hand in the heavens, far above every principality, authority, power, and dominion, and every name that is named not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things beneath his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of the one who fills all things in every way.

The Word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

Gospel: Matthew 28: 16-20

The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them. When they saw him, they worshiped, but they doubted. Then Jesus approached and said to them, "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age."

The Gospel of the Lord.

R. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.



MEDITATION: HEALING AND FORGIVENESS

*(through the eyes
of jesus)*

sitting on top
of the mountain
waiting for
the crowd today
i would say goodbye
to my friends
always hard
so many things
left unsaid
so much left undone
there would be tears

sitting in prayer
crisp clear morning
cloudless sky
recalling the events
of the past week

i could not go home
to my abba with
so much heaviness
in my heart
pain of the one
who had struck
my side
pain from his heart
guilt
the one who made
my mother weep
so brutally
whipped and beat me
so much of his pain
directed towards me

last night
i visited the soldier
dachaus
do not be afraid

i am not a ghost
i am here to
heal your pain
the pain
you keep inside
the pain that
causes you
to inflict pain
on others

dachaus
i forgive you
for hurting me
and my mother
i know the heaviness
you now feel
the weight of
your guilt for
stabbing me
in the side
dachaus
i am here
to bring healing

weeping tears
hot and wet
streaming
hitting the ground
mixing with
the red soil
a closed door
in dachaus's heart
was opened and
the pain was
flowing out
onto the ground

jesus
i have so much guilt
that night
i watched you die

with your mother
at the cross
reminded me
of my own brother
the night he died
while i watched
helplessly
could feel hate
slowly growing
that night

we were sitting
in the park
approached
by a rival gang
looking for
my brother
i stood up for
my brother
facing our enemies
gunshots going off
covering my brother
blood running
down my hands
my tears wet
the ground

jesus
my actions of anger
from that day
when they killed
my brother is
the pain that
i carry
to this day

dachaus
i know about
your pain
the way your guilt
causes you to act

traps you
in a cycle of violence
that is why i am here
to forgive you
i know you
need healing
this wound
in my side
can also heal
if you share with me
your pain
you don't have
to keep it in
i forgive you

now
on top of
this mountain
with the disciples
it is time to return
to my abba
i am confident
they will continue
the mission
of healing
of forgiving
even those
against you

do not fear
to share your pain
with me and
with each other
i will be with you
always
i know your pain
and i always
forgive you



REFLECTION: Jesus, I remember a time I carried this burden in my life, and you helped me...
I remember... I remember...

OUR FATHER

Let us pray with confidence to the Father
in the words our Savior gave us:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy Kingdom come,
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us,
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

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

SIGN OF PEACE

Jesus, you said to your apostles: "I leave you
peace, my peace I give you. Look not on our
sins, but on the faith of your Church, and
grant us the peace and unity of your kingdom
where you live forever and ever. **Amen.**

The peace of the Lord be with you always.
R. And with your spirit.

LAMB OF GOD

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:
Have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:
Have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:
Grant us peace.

This is Jesus, the Lamb of God, who takes away
the sins of the world. Happy are we who are called
to his supper.

**Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter
under my roof, but only say the word and my
soul shall be healed.**

COMMUNION

CLOSING PRAYER

Let us pray:

Lord God,

You have sent us your Son as a wonderful gift and
have given us your blessing of mercy. Now help us
to be more like Jesus and be moved carry out his
mission to love and serve others. We have seen all
he has done and believe, for he is always with us.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord. **R. Amen.**

