

**Addresses
for
Morning and Evening Prayer**

**according to the
1943 Lectionary
of the
USA 1928 Book of Common Prayer**

**Intended for use
by Layreaders
in the absence of a priest**

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Sunday after Ascension Day

**Sunday after Ascension (There are three choices of prop-
ers for each office this week)**

Morning Prayer A

First Lesson: Is 33:5-6, 17, 20-22

(same as that for Ascension Day EP)

*Here beginneth the fifth verse
of the thirty-third chapter of the Prophet Isaiah.*

5 The LORD is exalted; for he dwelleth on high:
he hath filled Zion with judgment and righteousness.

6 And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability
of thy times, and strength of salvation: the fear of
the LORD is his treasure.

17 Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they
shall behold the land that is very far off.

20 Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities:
thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a
tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of
the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither
shall any of the cords thereof be broken.

21 But there the glorious LORD will be unto us a
place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go
no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass
thereby.

22 For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our
lawgiver, the LORD is our king; he will save us.

Here endeth the First Lesson.

or we may hold on to the things of our own will.
 It really is up to us.
 We are called.
 The heavenly table is set,
 A welcome awaits.
 Will we accept it?

Let us pray.

Lead us, heavenly Father lead us,
 O'er the world's tempestuous sea;
 Guard us, guide us, keep us, feed us,
 For we have no help but thee,
 Yet possessing every blessing,
 If our God our Father be.

Lead us, Father, Son, and Holy spirit
 to the blest eternal destiny. Amen.

Second Lesson: John 17

*Here beginneth the seventeenth chapter
 of the Gospel according to St. John.*

1 These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:

2 As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

4 I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

5 And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

6 I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.

7 Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.

8 For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.

9 I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.

10 And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.

11 And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father,

keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.

12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.

13 And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

14 I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

18 As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know

We are incapable
of comprehending the wonders of Heaven,
but this is where He went, as He said,
to prepare a place for us,
for us -- though we do not deserve any of it;
for us -- though we have earned only condemnation,
for us who repent and believe and try to follow..

And there is something we must remember.
Everyone is invited.
everyone has the chance to accept this invitation,
but not everyone will.

As Jesus said:

*Blessed are they that do his commandments,
that they may have right to the tree of life,
and may enter in through the gates into the city.
For without are dogs, and sorcerers,
and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters,
and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.*

*He that is unjust, let him be unjust still:
and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still:
and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still:
and he that is holy, let him be holy still.
And, behold, I come quickly;
and my reward is with me,
to give every man according as his work shall be.*

God is merciful.

He does not desire that anyone be lost,
but He has given us free will.

We may accept His forgiveness and grace,
or we may choose to say, "NO."

We may repent, ask forgiveness,
and attempt to change our way of life,

Scripture has many descriptions of heaven.
 Much is said of that realm where God reigns
 in all His glory,
 of the blessedness where we shall reign with Him,
 incomprehensible as that may sound.
 The descriptions are mind-boggling,
 impossible to get our thoughts around,
 and sometimes they seem interminable,
 so filled with exotic images
 that we easily lose interest.
 Who really cares about golden streets,
 and gates made out of pearl,
 and jewels everywhere you look?
 But what if all that is a mere shadow
 of the incomprehensible beauty that is there?
 Maybe we're more interested in what is not there.
 We're told there is no more pain or sorrow or dying.
 We're told that all striving is over,
 that there will be no lack of anything we need.
 Above all, joy is found in who is there.
 There are the righteous of every generation,
 the saints who have served Him here,
 our own loved ones, perhaps.
 There are the thousands upon thousands of angels,
 and, above all,
 we shall be in the blessed Presence
 of the Father Almighty,
 of the Lamb slain
 from the Foundation of the world,
 Jesus, His only Son, our Saviour and Brother,
 and the everlasting Holy Spirit.

that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as
 thou hast loved me.
 24 Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast
 given me, be with me where I am; that they may
 behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for
 thou lovedst me before the foundation of the
 world.
 25 O righteous Father, the world hath not known
 thee: but I have known thee, and these have known
 that thou hast sent me.
 26 And I have declared unto them thy name, and
 will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast
 loved me may be in them, and I in them.

Here endeth the Second Lesson.

Homily

We are celebrating the Ascension of Our Lord:
Who was taken up into heaven,
where he sits at the right hand of the Father,
where he rules over the Church He established,
and intercedes with the Father for us.
We begin with the Prophet Isaiah,
bidding us to look two ways at once:

*"... The LORD is exalted; for he dwelleth on high:
he hath filled Zion
with judgment and righteousness...."*

He dwells on high, but He is not removed from us.
Zion, His Church, His people
is filled with His presence.

*"... Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty:
they shall behold the land that is very far off. ..."*

We look to the heavens to behold His glory,
and we get some glimmer of the beauty that is there,
but, we are called to

"... Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: ..."

Zion which stands for the Church of God,
the place where we celebrate His majesty,
in words and song, in bread and wine,
in celebration of that one holy Sacrifice

*"... thine eyes shall see Jerusalem
a quiet habitation,
a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; ..."*

A city of earth, yet the city of God,
where men strive and struggle and fail,
but yet a city preserved by God for eternity.

his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

20 He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Here endeth the Second Lesson.

Homily

We take a look this evening,
during this week of the Ascension,
as we stand, in our imagination,
looking skyward, into the clouds,
toward the last place where Jesus was seen,
as he ascended to take His place
at the Father's right hand --
we take a look, in tonight's readings
at the place where He dwells,
the place where He intercedes for us sinners,
the place to which He calls us,
the place from which He sent His Holy Spirit,
and from which He rules and governs His Church.
It is to this place,
to the throne room of Heaven,
that we ascend in thought, mind, and spirit,
every time we join in the Holy Eucharist,
in His own pleading of the Sacrifice of Calvary.

prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.

10 And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.

11 He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.

12 And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

15 For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.

17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away

*... But there the glorious LORD will be unto us
a place of broad rivers and streams; ...*

For the Church is not a place,
nor is Heaven a place,
as we might understand place,
but Our Lord is our resting place;
He is our home, both now in our earthly life,
and forever and ever. Amen.

*"... For the LORD is our judge,
the LORD is our lawgiver,
the LORD is our king; he will save us."*

In John 17 (the high priestly prayer),
we receive a good foreshadowing
of the Ministry of our Saviour
at the Right Hand of the Father.
He prayed that night,
the eve of his suffering and death,
as He prays now in His glory,
for the people He came to redeem.

*"They are not of the world,
even as I am not of the world.
Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.
As thou hast sent me into the world,
even so have I also sent them into the world.
And for their sakes I sanctify myself,
that they also might be sanctified through the truth.
Neither pray I for these alone,
but for them also
which shall believe on me through their word;
That they all may be one; as thou,
Father, art in me, and I in thee,
that they also may be one in us:*

*that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.
And the glory which thou gavest me
I have given them;
that they may be one, even as we are one:*

Imagine, if you will,
the power of the conversation
that goes on within the undivided Trinity,
a conversation that includes us,
that expresses the Saviour's will for our lives.
Imagine,
and then take a look at the reality around us.
Do Christians manifest the unity of God?
Or are we divided and constantly bickering?
Do we show the power of love
that was manifest in the washing of feet
and on the Cross?
Or do we prefer to show anger
and to make ourselves look better than others?
Christ has ascended into heaven!
May our hearts ascend to meet Him there.

Let us pray.

O God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, our only Saviour, the Prince of Peace; Give us grace seriously to lay to heart the great dangers we are in by our unhappy divisions. Take away all hatred and prejudice, and whatsoever else may hinder us from godly union and concord: that as there is but one Body and one Spirit, and one hope of our calling, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of us all, so we may be all of one heart and of one soul, united in one holy bond of truth and peace, of faith and charity, and may with one mind and one mouth glorify thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Second Lesson: Rev 22

Here beginneth the twenty-second chapter of the of the Revelation of St. John the Divine.

1 And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:

4 And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

6 And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.

7 Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

8 And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things.

9 Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the

Evening Prayer C

First Lesson: Dan 7:9-10, 13-14

(same as for Ascension Day, Morning Prayer)

*Here beginneth the ninth verse
of the seventh chapter of the Book of Daniel.*

9 I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire.

10 A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.

13 I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.

14 And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

Here endeth the First Lesson.

----- Morning Prayer B

First Lesson: Isaiah 4:2-6

*Here beginneth the Second verse
of the fourth chapter of the Prophet Isaiah.*

2 In that day shall the branch of the LORD be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel.

3 And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem:

4 When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.

5 And the LORD will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence.

6 And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the day time from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain.

Here endeth the First Lesson.

Second Lesson: Hebrews 4:14-5:10

(same as that for Ascension Day EP)

*Here beginneth the fourteenth verse
of the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews.*

14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest,
that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of
God, let us hold fast our profession.

15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be
touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was
in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of
grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to
help in time of need.

5:1 For every high priest taken from among men
is ordained for men in things pertaining to God,
that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins:

2 Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and
on them that are out of the way; for that he himself
also is compassed with infirmity.

3 And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people,
so also for himself, to offer for sins.

4 And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but
he that is called of God, as was Aaron.

5 So also Christ glorified not himself to be made
an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art
my Son, to day have I begotten thee.

6 As he saith also in another place, Thou art a
priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

7 Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered
up prayers and supplications with strong crying
and tears unto him that was able to save him from
death, and was heard in that he feared;

That Man, the Son of God, our Saviour,
has ascended into heaven,
has promised the gift of His Holy Spirit,
has gathered us into a Holy Church,
where he feeds with Word and Sacraments.
He is our shelter and defense,
He is our strength and shield.
He intends that we be with Him where He is,
for ever and ever.

Let us pray.

O God, by whom the meek are guided in judg-
ment, and light riseth up in darkness for the godly;
grant us, in all our doubts sand uncertainties, the
grace to ask what thou wouldest have us to do, that
the Spirit of Wisdom may save us from all false
choices, and that in thy light we may see light, and
in thy straight path may not stumble; through Jesus
Christ our Lord. Amen.

a hiding place from the wind,
 a shelter from the storm,
 a fountain for the thirsty,
 a shade from the searing rays of heat,
 a Savior for the condemned sinner,
 a Shepherd, Lord, and Friend.

*"For God sent not his Son into the world
 to condemn the world;
 but that the world through him might be saved.
 He that believeth on him is not condemned:
 but he that believeth not is condemned already,
 because he hath not believed
 in the name of the only begotten Son of God.
 And this is the condemnation,
 that light is come into the world,
 and men loved darkness rather than light,
 because their deeds were evil.
 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light,
 neither cometh to the light,
 lest his deeds should be reproved."*

"A man shall be a shelter"
 But he who refuses the shelter must face the storm,
 and takes judgment upon himself.
 If we refuse to admit that we have sinned,
 if we refuse to recognize that we have a problem,
 if we do not ask for forgiveness,
 for shelter,
 and for amendment of life,
 we have no protection, no healing.

*"... But he that doeth truth cometh to the light,
 that his deeds may be made manifest,
 that they are wrought in God."*

8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience
 by the things which he suffered;
 9 And being made perfect, he became the author of
 eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;
 10 Called of God an high priest after the order of
 Melchisedec.

Here endeth the Second Lesson.

Homily

Man's relationship to God has always been
 at the heart of what it is to be human,
 and that relationship has always been expressed
 in some form of sacrifice,
 in the offering of something tangible
 as an expression of worship.
 The very discord between the first two sons,
 Cain and Abel,
 revolved around the quality of sacrifice,
 and Noah's first act upon landing
 after the Great Flood,
 is depicted as the offering of sacrifice.
 God, we are told, in the time of Moses,
 appointed a priesthood, specific men
 to offer specific sacrifices for the people.

We are assured by Christ Himself,
 and throughout the New Testament,
 that the Hebrew Scriptures are first and foremost,
 a testimony and foreshadowing of the Saviour.
"...These are they which testify of me..." He said.
 The sacrifices of the Old Testament,
 bloody, messy, and repulsive to our eyes
 as they may be,

stand as a description of our redemption,
 of the victory over sin and death
 and the forces of evil,
 that was won on our behalf in the offering
 of the supreme Sacrifice on that holy Cross,
 an offering which was also
 bloody and messy and repulsive to our eyes,
 perhaps a fitting reminder to us that our sin
 is bloody and messy and repulsive
 in the eyes of God.

*"Seeing then that we have a great high priest,
 that is passed into the heavens,
 Jesus the Son of God,
 let us hold fast our profession."*

A Sacrifice requires someone to offer it.
 In Moses' time this was expressed as an appointed
 priesthood.
 Those priests, and only them, were appointed
 to represent the people and to bring their offerings
 before the face of God.
 In the fulfillment of all sacrifice,
 the one true immortal Oblation of Calvary,
 there was a Priest,
 and He was also himself the Offering.
 On the night before His death,
 he, as high priest, said,
"This is my Body; this is my Blood,"
 declared it an offering for the sins of the world,
 and gave it to his disciples as a sacrificial meal.
 That night he labored in prayer,
 presenting that gift to the Father,
"Not my will, but thine, be done..."
 and gave Himself over to the authorities.

and we, if we are honest with ourselves,
 find that we ourselves are a large part
 of many of these problems,
*"for all have sinned,
 and come short of the glory of God."*
 or, as Pogo of the cartoons said.
 "We have met the enemy,
 and he is us."

In the midst of such a troubling world,
 what we want is some kind of technique,
 a system by which we can solve the problems.
 We want something that we can do.
 We want to stand up like rebellious teens,
 and to shout heavenward,
 "Father, I can do it myself!"
 But we can't,
 and we really hate to admit it.

God hasn't provided us with something we can do,
 at least not something we can do ourselves,
 although there are ways we can cooperate
 with what He is doing,
 but God has provided a solution,
 a complete and thorough solution,
 not a technique, but a man,
 the man Christ Jesus,
 who, as reported by St. John, said:

*"... God so loved the world,
 that he gave his only begotten Son,
 that whosoever believeth in him should not perish,
 but have everlasting life."*

35 The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.

36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

Here endeth the Second Lesson.

Homily

*"... a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind,
and a covert from the tempest;
as rivers of water in a dry place,
as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."*

Wonderful words from the Prophet Isaiah,
just what this troubled world needs to hear,
but just what this world is not willing to hear.
There are wars everywhere,
and always the treat of terrorism.
There's a food shortage developing,
There are famines,
plagues, not only AIDS,
but an increasing number of others.
Climate change and other effects of pollution
become increasingly worrisome
The news is full of all sorts of nastiness,
all the time,

The next day the sacrifice was slain,
the eternal worship was accepted,
and on the third day He rose,
and with Him we can rise.

We're observing the Ascension.
Forty days after those events,
Our Lord was taken up into heaven,
where as eternal High Priest,
He continually presents that one Sacrifice,
once offered, in fulfillment of all promise,
before the face of the Father.
He is both eternal high priest
and the sacrificial Lamb once offered,
and stands as a pledge that no more need be done,
for the children of men
to be children of the Living God.
We are redeemed.
The price is paid.
We are called to the glories of heaven.

And, though we still struggle,
though our sins are always with us,
though we are forever tempted,
and always falling into sin,
our High Priest stands for us before God,
and we can know that He is ...

*"not an high priest which cannot be touched
with the feeling of our infirmities;
but was in all points tempted like as we are,
yet without sin. "*

He is Lord, awesome in His majesty,
but He is our Brother in the flesh,
He knows our weakness,

and does not cease to love us,
to intercede for us,
and to call us.

Let us pray.

O Jesus, High Priest, Lamb of God, Saviour,
look down upon us in our struggles,
forgive us our many sins,
deliver us from the grip of our temptations,
and lift us up, at last,
to dwell with thee on high.
Amen.

Morning Prayer C

First Lesson: Isaiah 65:17-25

*Here beginneth the seventeenth verse
of the Sixty-fifth chapter of the Prophet Isaiah.*

17 For, behold, I create new heavens and a new
earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor
come into mind.

18 But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that
which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a
rejoicing, and her people a joy.

Second Lesson: John 3:16-21, 31-36

*Here beginneth the sixteenth verse of the third
chapter of the Gospel according to St. John.*

16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his
only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in
him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

17 For God sent not his Son into the world to
condemn the world; but that the world through
him might be saved.

18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but
he that believeth not is condemned already, because
he hath not believed in the name of the only begot-
ten Son of God.

19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come
into the world, and men loved darkness rather than
light, because their deeds were evil.

20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light,
neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be
reproved.

21 But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that
his deeds may be made manifest, that they are
wrought in God.

31 He that cometh from above is above all: he that
is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth:
he that cometh from heaven is above all.

32 And what he hath seen and heard, that he testi-
fieth; and no man receiveth his testimony.

33 He that hath received his testimony hath set to
his seal that God is true.

34 For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words
of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure
unto him.

Evening Prayer B

First Lesson: Isa 32:1-4, 15-20

*Here beginneth the thirty-second chapter
of the Prophet Isaiah.*

1 Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment.

2 And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.

3 And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearken.

4 The heart also of the rash shall understand knowledge, and the tongue of the stammerers shall be ready to speak plainly.

15 Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest.

16 Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field.

17 And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.

18 And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places;

19 When it shall hail, coming down on the forest; and the city shall be low in a low place.

20 Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters, that send forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass.

Here endeth the First Lesson.

19 And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.

20 There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed.

21 And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them.

22 They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.

23 They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them.

24 And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD.

Here endeth the First Lesson.

Second Lesson: Rev 21:1-14; 21-27

Here beginneth the twenty-first chapter chapter of the Revelation of St. John the Divine.

1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

6 And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

continually providing wisdom,
continually providing power,
continually guiding and using
those He has called ---- US.

Let us pray now,
in the words we heard read in the Second Lesson:

We come to thee, O God of our Lord Jesus Christ,
O Father of glory, asking that thou wouldst
give unto us the spirit of wisdom and revelation
in the knowledge of thee:
The eyes of our understanding being enlightened;
that we may know what is the hope in this calling,
and what the riches
of the glory of the inheritance in the saints,
And what is the exceeding greatness
of thy power to us-ward who believe,
according to the working of thy mighty power,
Which thou hast wrought in Christ,
when thou dist raise him from the dead,
and set him at thine own right hand
in the heavenly places,
Far above all principality, and power,
and might, and dominion,
and every name that is named, not only in this world,
but also in that which is to come:
And hast put all things under his feet,
and given him to be the head over all things
to the church,
Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth
all in all.
Amen.

and these are really one and the same,
and by that Spirit of Wisdom and power,
the will of God is made known,
and the ability to do that will is given.

St. Paul gives a magnificent summary
of God's will for His Church, and for each of us,
beginning before the dawn of time:

*"... he hath chosen us in him]
before the foundation of the world,
that we should be holy and without blame
before him in love: "*

and continuing to the very moment in which we
now walk:

*"... That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the Father of glory,
may give unto you
the spirit of wisdom and revelation
in the knowledge of him: "*

Next week we celebrate Pentecost,
Whitsunday,
the day on which the Spirit of God,
the Third Person of the Holy Trinity,
God Himself,
was to fill the lives of those believers,
after which nothing would ever be the same.
On this rather strange in-between Sunday,
we are reminded that we, too,
are weak and unqualified,
and yet have a mission that is too big for us.
We need that same Promise.
We need the fullness of the Holy Spirit,
and He has promised to grant it.
He fills His people, over and over again,

9 And there came unto me one of the seven angels
which had the seven vials full of the seven last
plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither,
I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.

10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great
and high mountain, and shewed me that great city,
the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from
God,

11 Having the glory of God: and her light was like
unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper
stone, clear as crystal;

12 And had a wall great and high, and had twelve
gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names
written thereon, which are the names of the twelve
tribes of the children of Israel:

13 On the east three gates; on the north three gates;
on the south three gates; and on the west three
gates.

14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations,
and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the
Lamb.

21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls: every
several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the
city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

22 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God
Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

23 And the city had no need of the sun, neither of
the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did
lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

24 And the nations of them which are saved shall
walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do
bring their glory and honour into it.

25 And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by
day: for there shall be no night there.

26 And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.

27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Here endeth the Second Lesson.

Homily

Today, the Sunday after Ascension,
we stand figuratively with the Apostles
on the Mount of Olives,
looking upward in amazement.

We've watched our crucified and risen Lord
as he was taken ever higher into the heavens,
disappearing from our sight.

Here the Paschal candle has been snuffed,
not as a sign that the Lord is absent,
but that He has gone from our sight
to take His place at the right hand of the Father,
to intercede for us and to govern His Church,
until His coming again.

We saw Him ascend,

We heard our marching orders,
to take this gospel into all the world,
to teach, and to baptize.

They gathered in an upper room,
probably behind locked doors,
certainly confused,
probably fearful,
but somehow full of hope,
and they waited.

And what was it that they waited for?

They weren't really sure.

There was a promise from the Father,
and somehow it involved the Holy Ghost,
and somehow included power they did not have.
And they waited.

The Book of Wisdom shows us a Solomon
who came young to the throne,
young and feeling very unqualified.
He asked but one gift, the gift of wisdom,
but not mere human wisdom --
something more, as he said:

*"... wisdom was with thee:
which knoweth thy works,
and was present when thou madest the world,
and knew what was acceptable in thy sight,
and right in thy commandments."*

*"... what man is he
that can know the counsel of God?
or who can think what the will of the Lord is?"*

Solomon knew his inability,
The disciples knew their inability,
and so do we.
And so he prayed for divine wisdom,
and the disciples prayed for the Holy Ghost,

Homily

The Sunday after Ascension
comes in a short season of waiting.
We just joined with the little band of disciples,
as they stood with their Lord on the Mount of Olives,
and watched as he was taken up into the sky,
and in their wonderment they heard his command:

*"... that they should not depart from Jerusalem,
but wait for the promise of the Father,
which, said he, ye have heard of me.
... ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost
not many days hence.
... ye shall receive power,
after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you:
and ye shall be witnesses unto me ..."*

It was a time of waiting.
It was a time of wondering.
The infant not-quite-church had a mission,
but not a very clear idea of what the mission was,
and certainly no idea whatever
of how it would come to be done.
It was a little band, very small,
opposed by the Jewish authorities,
opposed by the might of the Roman Empire,
most of whom were simple folk,
not very well educated,
not wealthy,
without powerful connections.
They knew they were incapable
of doing what they were commanded to do,
but this one thing they could do --
they waited.

But along with the orders there is a promise,
a precious twofold promise:
that He will come again
to judge both the living and the dead,
and to call his own to His side;
and that where he is, there shall we go.

Both lessons today reflect that promise.
We hear twin visions by the Prophet Isaiah
and the Beloved Apostle John.
Both of them were allowed to see,
as well as any mortal man can see,
the glories of a time and place
that are quite unlike the time and place we know.

St. John speaks in strange symbols,
a vain attempt
to describe what cannot be described:
He speaks of a city descending from heaven,
a city prepared like a bride.
He described gates made of pearls,
and streets paved with gold,
but with gold as transparent as glass
(whatever exactly that might mean),
of jewels and walls and lights.
Elsewhere he writes of angels and saints,
and strange beasts, all gathered around the throne.
What does this all mean?
We really can neither know nor understand it now,
nor could St. John,
but we can sense the intense beauty
and the glory of it.

Both writers tell us of a new heaven
and a new earth,

and both of them make a great deal of
what is NOT there.
Neither the weakness of an infant nor the feeble-
ness of the old,
nor the evils that beset this troubled world,
for, as St John said,

*"... there shall in no wise enter into it
any thing that defileth,
neither whatsoever worketh abomination,
or maketh a lie:
but they
which are written in the Lamb's book of life."*

The trials and sorrows that we know all too well
will be forever gone:

*"... I heard a great voice out of heaven saying,
Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men,
and he will dwell with them,
and they shall be his people,
and God himself shall be with them,
and be their God.
And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes;
and there shall be no more death,
neither sorrow, nor crying,
neither shall there be any more pain:
for the former things are passed away."*

He has, as He said, gone to prepare a place for us,
and while we wait for His appearing,
He has provided a Church,
the Word, the Sacraments,
the knowledge of His grace,
and the way to receive it.

12 That we should be to the praise of his glory,
who first trusted in Christ.

13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the
word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in
whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed
with that holy Spirit of promise,

14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the
redemption of the purchased possession, unto the
praise of his glory.

15 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in
the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,

16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention
of you in my prayers;

17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father
of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom
and revelation in the knowledge of him:

18 The eyes of your understanding being
enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of
his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his
inheritance in the saints,

19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his
power to us-ward who believe, according to the
working of his mighty power,

20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised
him from the dead, and set him at his own right
hand in the heavenly places,

21 Far above all principality, and power, and
might, and dominion, and every name that is
named, not only in this world, but also in that
which is to come:

22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave
him to be the head over all things to the church,

23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that fil-
leth all in all.

Here endeth the Second Lesson.

Second Lesson: Eph 1

*Here beginneth the first chapter
of the Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians.*

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:

2 Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;

9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

He provides guides along the way,
and His still, small voice is ever calling.
*"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden,
and I will refresh you."*

He provides the waters of baptism,
a new birth into his Church and His Kingdom.
To those who are baptized He provides
Himself as spiritual food.
To the sinner He offers absolution.
To the pilgrim he opens the Way,
and He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.
Come to Him,
Commit yourselves to Him.
And dwell with Him in glory everlasting.

Let us pray.

Direct us, O Lord, in all our doings, with thy most gracious favour, and further us with thy continual help; that in all things, begun, continued, and ended in thee, we may glorify thy holy Name, and finally, by thy mercy, obtain everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Evening Prayer A

First Lesson: Wisdom 9

*Here beginneth the ninth chapter
of the Book of Wisdom.*

- 1: O God of my fathers, and Lord of mercy, who hast made all things with thy word,
- 2: And ordained man through thy wisdom, that he should have dominion over the creatures which thou hast made,
- 3: And order the world according to equity and righteousness, and execute judgment with an upright heart:
- 4: Give me wisdom, that sitteth by thy throne; and reject me not from among thy children:
- 5: For I thy servant and son of thine handmaid am a feeble person, and of a short time, and too young for the understanding of judgment and laws.
- 6: For though a man be never so perfect among the children of men, yet if thy wisdom be not with him, he shall be nothing regarded.
- 7: Thou hast chosen me to be a king of thy people, and a judge of thy sons and daughters:
- 8: Thou hast commanded me to build a temple upon thy holy mount, and an altar in the city wherein thou dwellest, a resemblance of the holy tabernacle, which thou hast prepared from the beginning.
- 9: And wisdom was with thee: which knoweth thy works, and was present when thou madest the world, and knew what was acceptable in thy sight, and right in thy commandments.
- 10: O send her out of thy holy heavens, and from the throne of thy glory, that being present she may

labour with me, that I may know what is pleasing unto thee.

11: For she knoweth and understandeth all things, and she shall lead me soberly in my doings, and preserve me in her power.

12: So shall my works be acceptable, and then shall I judge thy people righteously, and be worthy to sit in my father's seat.

13: For what man is he that can know the counsel of God? or who can think what the will of the Lord is?

14: For the thoughts of mortal men are miserable, and our devices are but uncertain.

15: For the corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthy tabernacle weigheth down the mind that museth upon many things.

16: And hardly do we guess aright at things that are upon earth, and with labour do we find the things that are before us: but the things that are in heaven who hath searched out?

17: And thy counsel who hath known, except thou give wisdom, and send thy Holy Spirit from above?

18: For so the ways of them which lived on the earth were reformed, and men were taught the things that are pleasing unto thee, and were saved through wisdom.

Here endeth the First Lesson.
