

Lectionary readings: Acts 1: 1-11; Psalm 47; Ephesians 1: 15-23; Luke 24: 44-53 (The Ascension of Jesus)

For reflection and prayer

- **Acts 1:** I confess that I don't know what to make of the ascension. But what I do know is that the disciples had a real experience of the presence of Christ with them after the resurrection, not just one, but many encounters with the living Christ, when they were aware of His presence with them in a different way from when He had been with them before. Increasingly, I am convinced that doctrines and dogma - all the things that divide people and cause dissension - are less important than experiencing the living, transforming power of God in our day to day lives. I'm sure that, as the disciples stood gazing into heaven, it was all a great mystery to them, as it is to us. But what we are called to be and to do is to be aware of the presence of God in our lives and let God change us so that we become the people God created us to be - knowing how loved we are, and allowing that love to heal us. And then to reach out with that same love to others. Each one of us can have encounters with Jesus every day this week, not in extraordinary ways, but in the ordinary, everyday experiences of life, as we open ourselves to Him.
- **Psalm 47:** God is King of the whole earth, the Psalmist says. He is Love inviting us to co-create with Him. He invites us to live in peace. He calls us to join in the cosmic celebration and sing praises to Him, the Creator, our Beloved. The whole earth belongs to God, who is

Love. But unless we open our hearts to Him and to His love, how can people around us know God's presence?

- **Ephesians 1:** This is Paul's prayer for the Ephesians. First of all he gives thanks for their faith and their love. It's always good, when we pray for someone, to find something that we can give thanks for. Then Paul prays that the Ephesians will know Christ personally, intimately, and open themselves to the amazing, glorious life that they are called to as Christians. Paul speaks of the extravagance of God's grace and His boundless strength. This is something we all need to open ourselves to - the amazing grace and power that Christ has made available to us, the body of Christ. Christ wants to fill us with His presence.
- **Luke 24:** God is within us through His Spirit, empowering us to live like Jesus, who showed us how to love, how to forgive, how to respond to people and situations out of that deep place within where God dwells. Jesus has given us His Spirit to enable us to become the fully human, balanced person that He showed us it is possible to be. Whatever happened that day, the disciples were left bursting with joy, full of praise. Let this week be a week when we reflect on the transformation that God has made possible for each one of us as we open our lives to Him.

A prayer

Risen, ascended Lord, thank You that You are never absent from us. You are with us all the time. May Your presence in our hearts fill our emptiness and may we sing Your song and dance Your dance as we journey on with You day by day, celebrating the mystery of our glorious Lord.