



Liturgy of the Word Ascension Sunday, World Communications Day, Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Prepare: Read through beforehand. Open the two links for a song at the beginning and at the end.

SONG: All The Ends of the Earth © Bob Dufford <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6FDyNx1ceDc>

SIGN OF THE CROSS: In name of the Father... OR Ki te ingoa... *Extend a warm welcome anyone else with you.* Today is Ascension Sunday. We also begin the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and it is World Communications Day. Pope Francis is asking us on this day to connect with the power of story-telling. The week of prayer for Christian unity draws our attention to the story of the shipwreck of Paul. Those who met them onshore 'showed unusual kindness.' Likewise, we too are called to show 'unusual kindness' to all we meet on our way and especially to Christians of other denominations.

READER: Let's begin with a litany of reconciliation. The response is, 'Lord have mercy.'

For divisions in the Christian Church; Lord have mercy	All Lord have mercy
For isolating ourselves and remaining indifferent, Lord have mercy	All lord have mercy
For not showing hospitality to strangers and refugees, Lord have mercy	All Lord have mercy
For choosing not to trust one another, Lord have mercy	All Lord have mercy
For mistakes that haunt us, Lord have mercy	All Lord have mercy
For hiding in comfortable spaces, Lord have mercy	All Lord have mercy
For failing to hope for unity, Lord have mercy	All Lord have mercy
For being the cause of pain, Lord have mercy	All Lord have mercy
For neglecting to show kindness, Lord have mercy	All Lord have mercy

READER: and now a litany of praise. The response is, 'Lord you are kind in all your ways.'

For healing our divisions	ALL Lord you are kind in all your ways
For binding us together	ALL Lord you are kind in all your ways
For creating welcome in us	ALL Lord you are kind in all your ways
For restoring our ability to trust	ALL Lord you are kind in all your ways
For overcoming our mistakes and failings	ALL Lord you are kind in all your ways
For drawing us into the light	ALL Lord you are kind in all your ways
For pointing us toward new hope	ALL Lord you are kind in all your ways
For awakening our sensitivity toward others	ALL Lord you are kind in all your ways
For liberating our ability to be kind	ALL Lord you are kind in all your ways

Pause for a time to reflect on these words.

COLLECT - READER Let us bring to mind all we want to pray for. *(Allow silence, 1 minute)*

O God, whose Son today ascended to the heavens as the Apostles looked on, grant, we pray, that in accordance with his promise, we may be worthy for him to live with us always on earth, and we with him in heaven. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. **All: Amen.**

First READING: Acts 1:1-11

Allow a time of silence after the reading. (1-2 minutes).

PSALM: 47 *(These words can be sung to the tune 'Amazing Grace.')*

1. O clap your – hands now all you people,
With songs of- joy shout to God.
For the most- high is awesome indeed
A great king o'er all the earth.
2. For God has- gone up with a shout
The Lord with the sound of a trumpet.
Sing praises to God, sing praises indeed,
Sing praise to our King, sing praise.
3. For God is- king o'er all the earth.
Sing praises to God with a psalm.
For God- is king o'er all the lands
God sits on a holy throne.

Second READING: Ephesians 1:17-23 *Allow a time of silence after the reading (1-2 minutes).*

GOSPEL: Matthew 28:16-20 *Allow a time of silence after the reading (1-2 minutes).*

REFLECTION:

READER The following extract comes from Pope Francis Message for the 54th World Communications Day. Listen to what the Pope says.

'I would like to devote this year's Message to the theme of storytelling, because I believe that, so as not to lose our bearings, we need to make our own the truth contained in good stories. Stories that build up, not tear down; stories that help us rediscover our roots and the strength needed to move forward together.

Human beings are storytellers. From childhood we hunger for stories just as we hunger for food. Stories influence our lives, whether in the form of fairy tales, novels, films, songs, news, even if we do not always realize it. Often we decide what is right or wrong based on characters and stories we have made our own. Stories leave their mark on us; they shape our convictions and our behaviour. They can help us understand and communicate who we are.'

Discuss: What do we learn from stories?

ALL: I believe in God, the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting.

All Amen.

Prayer of the Faithful:

READER: Let us pray together. As God's people, we are called to pray for the needs of the whole world.

If you are by yourself pray the petition and the whole response.

For the Church – that all Christian churches will strive towards unity, actively seeking ways to tell stories, pray and serve together as one body.

Silence: **Reader:** Christ has died, Christ is risen!

All: Alleluia. Let us rejoice!

For the people who govern and direct the world's financial systems – that their hearts may be enlightened, and they use wisely the power they have to bring health and healing to the poorest of the world's peoples.

Silence: **Reader:** Christ has died, Christ is risen! **All:** Alleluia. Let us rejoice!

For poor nations without adequate health systems – that their governments recognise the importance of providing good health care for all their citizens and that they will be supported by wealthy countries.

Silence: **Reader:** Christ has died, Christ is risen! **All:** Alleluia. Let us rejoice!

For teachers in Catholic Schools – that they understand their role as disciples and story-tellers, forming children in their care to love God, to know they are loved by God, and to try to be guided by Jesus.

Silence: **Reader:** Christ has died, Christ is risen! **All:** Alleluia. Let us rejoice!

For all teachers and educators – that they understand the powerful influence they have in children's lives, and that they provide education that is rich, relevant, meaningful and safe.

Silence: **Reader:** Christ has died, Christ is risen! **All:** Alleluia. Let us rejoice!

For grandparents and parents – that through their conscious attentiveness and rich story-telling to children, they stir in them a sense of wonder that leads to inspiration, affirmation, delight, understanding, faith and a desire for unity.

Silence: **Reader:** Christ has died, Christ is risen! **All:** Alleluia. Let us rejoice!

For India and Bangladesh – that they will be supported as they face both covid-19 and cyclone Amphan.

Silence: **Reader:** Christ has died, Christ is risen! **All:** Alleluia. Let us rejoice!

ALL Forgiving God, set us free from the painful memories of the past, that wound our shared Christian life. Lead us to reconciliation so that, through the Holy Spirit we may overcome hatred with love, anger with gentleness, and suspicion with trust. We ask this in the name of your beloved Son, our brother Jesus. Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER: We pray the prayer Jesus gave us.

COLLECTION: Part of our commitment as Christian is to give to those in need. Think about what you might like to make a donation to, or offer to help in another way. These are some ideas.

- **Your Parish:** your parish and presbytery still have operating costs.
- **The Caring Foundation Covid-19 appeal** to donate, click [here](#)
- **Catholic Social Services Auckland** to donate, click [here](#)
- **The Catholic aid agency Caritas** to support their work, click [here](#)
- **St Vincent de Paul** contact your parish or click [here](#)
- **Cyclone Amphan**

READER: Thank you for your participation in today's Liturgy of the Word. Let us go to be one. To seek to be one with Christians of other denominations. To share with people the good news that the kingdom of God has come. And to love as Jesus loved. May God bless you and your family.

All: Thanks be to God.

SONG: Let's sing together. *Go Tell Everyone* © Alan Dale & Hubert Richards
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=65ZY_AkVGPA

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The Pope's whole message for the 54th World communications Day, at this link

http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/communications/documents/papa-francesco_20200124_messaggio-comunicazioni-sociali.html

Week of Prayer for Christian unity – Resources <https://geii.org/index.html>