

**The Seventh Sunday of
Easter
17th May 2026
The Sunday after
Ascension Day**



HYMN

1 Rejoice, the Lord is King:
Your Lord and King adore!
Rejoice, give thanks and sing,
And triumph evermore.
Lift up your heart,
Lift up your voice!
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

2 Jesus, the Saviour, reigns,
The God of truth and love;
When He has purged our stains,
He took his seat above;
Lift up your heart,
Lift up your voice!
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

3 His kingdom cannot fail,
He rules o'er earth and heaven;
The keys of death and hell
Are to our Jesus given:
Lift up your heart,
Lift up your voice!
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

4 Rejoice in glorious hope!
Our Lord and judge shall come
And take His servants up
To their eternal home:
Lift up your heart,
Lift up your voice!
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

Prayers of Penitence

Jesus Christ, risen Master and triumphant Lord,
we come to you in sorrow for our sins,
and confess to you our weakness and unbelief.

We have lived by our own strength,
and not by the power of your resurrection.
Lord have mercy

We have lived by the light of our own eyes,
as faithless and not believing.
Christ have mercy

We have lived for this world alone,
and doubted our home in heaven.
Lord have mercy

May the Father of all mercies
+ cleanse you from your sins,
and restore you in his image
to the praise and glory of his name,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Absolution

Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.
For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

The Collect

O God the King of glory,
you have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ
with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven:
we beseech you, leave us not comfortless,
but send your Holy Spirit to strengthen us
and exalt us to the place where our Saviour Christ is gone before,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, for forty days we have been celebrating with joyful hearts the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, his bursting from the tomb and his defeat of the power of sin and death. He appeared to his disciples many times and told them about the kingdom of God.

On Thursday we recalled how he left this earth and returned to his Father, ascending into heaven to take his throne over all dominions and powers. Trusting in his reign over all creation, and submitting to his kingly yet loving rule, let us hear again the story of his parting.

A reading from the New Testament
Acts 1. 6-14

⁶Then they gathered around him and asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

⁹After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

¹⁰They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ¹¹"Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

¹²Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk[□] from the city. ¹³When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. ¹⁴They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

This is the word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Psalm 68 1-10

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John (Ch. 17. 1-11)
Glory to you O Lord.

17 After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, 'Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, 2 since you have given him authority over all people to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. 3 And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. 4 I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. 5 So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.

6 'I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. 7 Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; 8 for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. 9 I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. 10 All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. 11 And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.

This is the Gospel of the Lord
Praise to you O Christ

Reflection

What we call the 'Lord's Prayer' – the 'Our Father...' is not really the Lord's prayer but rather it is a pattern of prayer Jesus gave to his disciples when they asked him 'Lord, teach us how to pray'.

To be accurate, what we read today from John's gospel chapter 17 is the Lord's prayer. It is Jesus praying whilst with his closest disciples just before he walks with them to the garden of Gethsemane to face his arrest, trial and crucifixion.

He prays "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you..."

Glory is not a word we use very often. We might use it as an adjective to speak of a view as being glorious, or of an old but precious object being returned to its former 'glory' by 'The Repair Shop'. I have heard it used to describe beauty 'her hair was her glory'. But not often as a verb except perhaps on Royal Occasions when a building or action is said to have 'glorified the occasion'.

We use the word 'glory' to mean something exceptional or significant. But such things become so because they are extraordinary but also transient; they do not endure which gives them worth.

The view will change, objects will ultimately return to dust, beauty is fading and great moments pass into history. Fireworks are glorious but quickly gone.

So how might we understand Jesus' use of this word? The Amplified Bible brings out the nuances of the word by rendering the text 'glorify and exalt and honour and magnify'. Thus, Jesus prays that God will glorify him in order that he may in turn, glorify the Father.

He is about to face something dreadful, and he knows that. What can he mean?

Jesus says, "the hour has come...". His whole earthly life was moving towards this moment. Many times he had told his disciples that they were following him to his death which he appeared to embrace. This 'hour' was no surprise event but the inevitable consequence of his ministry and, for Jesus, the purpose for which he came.

To Jesus the cross was the glory of his life and the way to the glory of eternity. But why should such a death bring glory?

Here we are speaking about a glory that is altogether different; here it is not transient but a state of being. Recall when Jesus was transfigured on the mountain. It was an indescribable event, but the disciples could remember enough of it to remember that Jesus spoke with Elijah and Moses 'about his death' (Luke 9.29). Glory, transfiguration, death seem to be tied up together.

The death of Jesus was the climax of his life. Consider this, if Jesus had just continued his ministry and died of old age, would we have ever known his name? But his death was notable, for even the centurion at the foot of the cross was left saying "Truly this man was the Son of God".



Christ in Glory in the Tetramorph

Coventry Cathedral

But if the crucifixion had been the end, then Jesus is just another martyr. Instead, the power of the cross is his glory. The cross drew people to Jesus in a way that even his life had never done - and it is so yet.

The cross was the completion of his work. Jesus knew that to have stopped short would have left his task incomplete. Jesus told his followers clearly "I have come to die...". He had come to us to tell us and show us the love of God.

The cross shows us that there is nothing that the love of God was not prepared to do and suffer for us, that there was literally no limit to the love of God. In death Jesus pours out for us all that he had to give; he accomplished his task. His cry of "It is finished!" is no cry of despair or defeat but of completion.

The cross glorifies God the Father by Jesus' obedience to God; he rendered perfect obedience in perfect love. Humanly speaking Jesus could have walked away from it all, saved his life, called down legions of angels in the garden to deliver him, but his love for God held him to his course.

The cross was the vindication of Jesus. Jesus did not raise himself from death; the Resurrection was God's act. Humanity did its worst physically and what Jesus encountered spiritually is to us, unknown. But God raised him making the cross a sign of glory not of shame.

Perhaps we might think of the cross as a gateway. Jesus describes himself as 'the door, the way' or as has become a modern idiom 'a portal'. For Jesus the cross was the gateway to glory. Had he not passed through there would have been no glory for him to enter, and significantly, no way for us to follow. Some of you may remember the old chorus:

There's a way back to God, from the dark paths of sin
There's a door that is open and you may go in;
At Calvary's cross is where you begin,
When you come as a sinner to Jesus.

Affirmation of Faith

Let us declare our faith in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ died for our sins

in accordance with the Scriptures;
he was buried;
he was raised to life on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures;
afterwards he appeared to his followers,
and to all the apostles:
this we have received,
and this we believe.
Amen.

Intercessions

Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
you have exalted your Son Christ Jesus to your right hand,
and made him the head over all things for his body the Church:
hear us as we pray for the Church throughout the world ...

Make us and all your people receptive to the gifts you pour upon us,
that we may use them to your glory,
and the building up of the body of Christ.
Lord, in your mercy:
hear our prayer.

Lord God Almighty, the Ancient of Days,
you have given your Son all authority in heaven and on earth:
hear us as we pray for the world he came to redeem ...
Grant that we may know even in this time the things that make for peace,
and may strive for the reconciliation of all people
in his kingdom of justice and love.
Lord, in your mercy:
hear our prayer.

O God our Redeemer, whose Son ever lives to make intercession for us:
hear us as we pray for those in any kind of need ...
May he who has borne our infirmities strengthen and heal them,
that they may find grace to help in time of need,
and rejoice in his salvation.
Lord, in your mercy:
hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, whose Son has borne our humanity into the heavenly realms,
and gone before us to prepare a place for us:
hear us as we remember before you those whose earthly sojourn is over,
and whose life is now hidden in him with you ...
Make us joyful and expectant, that at his coming with all his own
we too may go forth to meet him and share in his eternal joy.

God our Father,
you have raised our humanity in Christ
mercifully grant that, nourished with spiritual blessings,
we may set our hearts in the heavenly places;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Gathering our prayers and praise into one, let us pray as our Saviour taught us

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours now and for ever.
Amen.

The Blessing

Eternal God, giver of love and power,
your Son Jesus Christ has sent us into all the world
to preach the gospel of his kingdom:
confirm us in this mission,
and help us to live the good news we proclaim;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
and the blessing of + God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
be with you and those for whom you pray now and always. Amen

HYMN

We have a gospel to proclaim
good news for men in all the earth;
the gospel of a saviours' name:
we sing his glory, tell his worth.

Tell of his birth at Bethlehem,
not in a royal house or hall
but in a stable dark and dim:
the word made flesh, a light for all.

Tell of his death at calvary,
hated by those he came to save;
in lonely suffering on the cross
for all he loved, his life he gave.

Tell of that glorious easter morn:
empty the tomb, for he was free.
He broke the power of death and hell
that we might share his victory.

Tell of his reign at god's right hand,
by all creation glorified;
he sends his spirit on his church
to live for him, the lamb who died.

Now we rejoice to name him king:
Jesus is lord of all the earth.
This gospel message we proclaim:
we sing his glory, tell his worth.