

ASCENSION OF OUR LORD

Dearly beloved:

On Wednesday, May 24th, our church is celebrating the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Gospel reading for today is the continuation of the May 14th Sunday's reading. That Sunday, our Achen read about Jesus appearing to two men on their way to Emmaus from Jerusalem, and as soon as they recognized the risen Christ, they were so excited and went back to Jerusalem to find and inform the disciples of this great news. .

On the fortieth day after the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, His eleven disciples and those two men who came back from Emmaus were all together in one house in Jerusalem. They were still talking about the Crucifixion and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ when suddenly, Jesus Christ appeared to them and said "Peace be with you". They were all frightened. To calm them down, Jesus assured His disciples that He is not a ghost. Then, He proceeded to show them the marks of His crucifixion and explained to them how the scriptures foretold of His death and rising. As He showed them His real hand, He took bread, blessed and broke it and ate with them. He walked with them to Bethany, and He lifted up His hand and blessed them. While blessing them, He was parted from them, ascending to heaven. They all worshiped Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, continually praising God.

Now with the risen Lord and Saviour having ascended to the right hand of the Father in heaven, Jesus promised to send them the Holy Spirit who would anoint them with power on the Feast of Pentecost Day, which our church will be celebrated on Sunday June 4th. Remember that Jesus was anointed with Holy Spirit for His ministry at the river of Jordan.

Today's Ascension service begins during the middle of the Holy Qurbana (at the end of Busmalko). Our Achen is going to take the Holy Cross from the "N'ortho" and will have a procession inside the church. During the procession, the faithful will repeatedly sing the famous song "Sleebaye Vandippaayi Heleneeragnji" from page 39 of the Malayalam Holy Qurbanakramam or from page number 62 of the English Holy Qurbanakramam book. After the procession, there will be a special service to celebrate the elevation of the Holy Cross, after which the Holy Qurbana services will resume.

The Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ is celebrated by the Orthodox Church as one of the great feasts on the 40th day after Resurrection. Through the cross, Jesus defeated Satan and saved us from sin. His cross is the door to heaven and the key to paradise. Jesus promised through His disciples that He would be with us always to the end of time. All are requested to attend this important service.

Lord Jesus Christ, open our minds to understand the scriptures and the truth of your words – Fill us with the joy of resurrection and help us to live a life of praise and thanksgiving for your glory”.

Please read the following Bible verses, in preparation for the commemoration of the Lord's Ascension.

Bible readings for Sunday, May 24th, 2006.

(Ascension of Our Lord)

Before Holy Qurbana:

Deuteronomy	-	9: 26 10: 5
Jeremiah	-	31: 31-34
II Kings	-	2: 9-15
Isaiah	-	48: 20 49: 4

Holy Qurbana

General Epistles:	Acts	-	1: 4-11
Epistles of St. Paul:	Ephesians	-	4: 1-16
Holy Gospel:	St. Luke	-	24: 36-53

With prayers,
Thomas Alex