

May 17th 2020

Thursday May 21st is Ascension Day. Ascension, in Christian belief, is the ascent of Jesus Christ into heaven on the 40th day after his Resurrection (Easter being reckoned as the first day). The Feast of the Ascension ranks with Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost in the universality of its observance among Christians. The feast has been celebrated 40 days after Easter in both Eastern and Western Christianity since the 4th century. Prior to that time, the Ascension was commemorated as a part of the celebration of the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

The meaning of the Ascension for Christians is derived from their belief in the glorification and exaltation of Jesus following his death and Resurrection, as well as from the theme of his return to God the Father. Thus, the Gospel According to John uses both the sayings of Jesus and his post-Resurrection appearances to indicate a new relationship between Jesus and his Father and between him and his followers, rather than a simple physical relocation from earth to heaven.



Rembrandt

Scripture And Observances

According to the first chapter of The Acts of the Apostles, after appearing to the Apostles on various occasions during a period of 40 days, Jesus was taken up in their presence and was then hidden from them by a cloud, a frequent biblical image signifying the presence of God. Although belief in the Ascension is apparent in other books of the New Testament, the emphasis and the imagery differ. In the Gospel According to John, the glorification described by the Ascension story seems to have

W. H.

EUCCHARISTIC VESTMENTS FOR
ASCENSION DAY.

Sir,—Possibly you will not grudge me space wherein to tell your readers that I have a handsome white moiré antique chasuble, an ordinary amice and maniple, quite new; and an alb and girdle slightly used, to offer to any brother priest to whom cost is an object. One who has not as yet commenced the use of the vestments in any shape or material, and whose communicants generally desire their introduction, will be more than welcome to these.

If any who apply to me will kindly write at once and give the full address to which a parcel can be addressed, I will endeavour to forward these articles to the one selected in time for use on Ascension Day.

Faithfully yours,
RICHARD WILKINS.

Clifton House, Exeter.

From the "Church Times" May 25th 1867

taken place immediately after the Resurrection. The imagery of the account in the Gospel According to Luke is similar to that of Acts, but there is no mention of a period of 40 days. The Ascension of Jesus is mentioned in the Apostles' Creed, a profession of faith used for baptism in the early church.

A distinctive feature of the feast's liturgy in the Western churches is the extinguishing of the Paschal candle, first lit on Easter, after the Gospel has been read, as a symbol of Christ's leaving the earth. Despite the idea of separation indicated in this act, which might be expected to set a note of sadness, the whole liturgy of Ascensiontide, through the 10 days to Pentecost, is marked by joy in the final triumph of the risen Lord. One of the central themes of the feast is the kingship of Christ, and the theological implication is that the Ascension was the final redemptive act conferring participation in the divine life on all who are members of Christ. In other words, Christ "was lifted up into heaven so that he might make us partakers of his Godhead."

From Britannia.com, recently revised and updated by [Melissa Petruzzello](#), Assistant Editor.

Ascension

[John Donne](#) - 1572-1631

*Salute the last, and everlasting day,
Joy at the uprising of this Sun, and Son,
Ye whose true tears, or tribulation
Have purely wash'd, or burnt your drossy clay.
Behold, the Highest, parting hence away,
Lightens the dark clouds, which He treads upon;
Nor doth he by ascending show alone,
But first He, and He first enters the way.
O strong Ram, which hast batter'd heaven for me!
Mild lamb, which with Thy Blood hast mark'd the path!
Bright Torch, which shinest, that I the way may see!
O, with Thy own Blood quench Thy own just wrath;
And if Thy Holy Spirit my Muse did raise,
*Deign at my hands this crown of prayer and praise**

Music for Ascension Day

Some of our best-loved hymns are sung at Ascensiontide, “All hail the power of Jesus’ name” is one of them. Its author Edward Perronet was of Huguenot stock and was the son of a vicar, but during his life he moved towards Methodism and after leaving them he became the pastor of a small independent congregation in Canterbury. He wrote many hymns but this is the only one that has stood the test of time and even then has undergone many revisions. It is usually sung to the tune Miles Lane by William Schrubsole (1760-1806), who was organist at Bangor Cathedral until he was dismissed for frequenting Dissenting Conventicles. Here it is as a mighty recessional: <https://youtu.be/reure13P8MU>

“Crown him with many crowns” has also undergone a number of revisions to William Bridges’s verses. But it is the original version that is usually sung now. It first appeared in Bridges’s “Hymns of the Heart” in 1851. The most popular of several tunes used is probably Diademata by Sir George Elvey (1816-1893), organist and choirmaster AT St George’s Chapel, Windsor. Here it is sung in Westminster Abbey on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Queen Elizabeth’s accession to the throne: <https://youtu.be/3kPkighup8E>

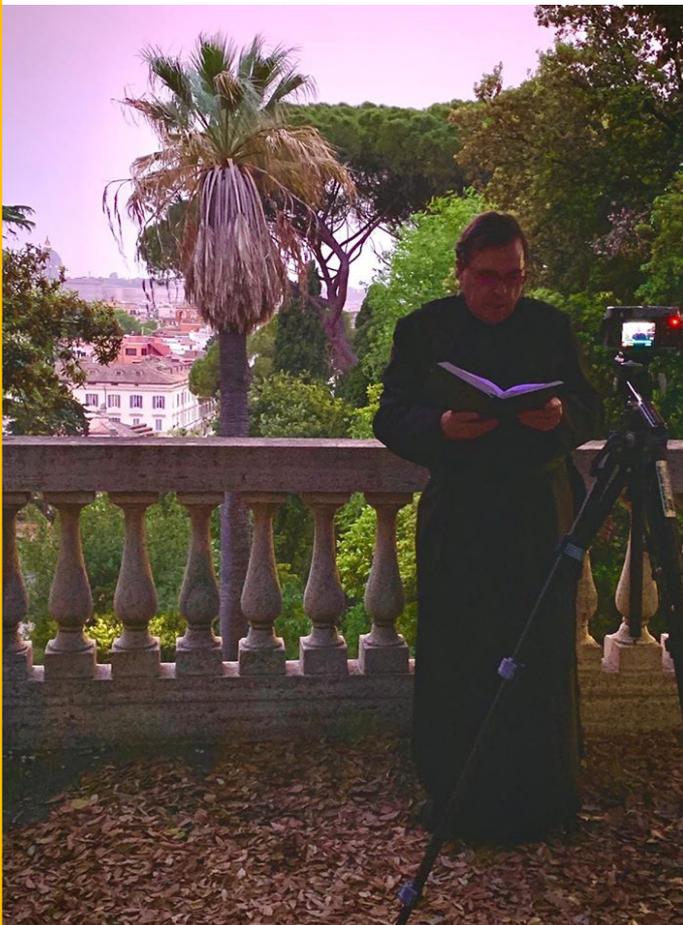
Another hymn that is rarely missing from traditional Ascension Day services is “Hail the Day that sees him rise”, originally written by Charles Wesley but almost unrecognisable in the version currently sung, and which is largely the work of Thomas Cotterill (1779-1823), Vicar of Lane End, Staffordshire. The general effect of the revision was to “tone down the ecstatic and emotional language of the original” (Bradley). The tune Llanfair is by Robert Williams (1781-1821), a basket weaver by

trade and able, although blind, to transcribe a tune after hearing it only once. In this video it is sung in the church of St John's, Detroit:

<https://youtu.be/nWvG7eIBZHc>

News from All Saints'

- **At the time of writing it is hoped that the church will finally be open for services, starting with the Ascension Day service at 12.45 on Thursday. The government has produced a three page document explaining the protocol to be followed, and All Saints' will be following all the recommendations in terms of safety, sanitation and social distancing. Among the many rules there is the obligation to wear a mask or face-covering (unlike the UK no distinction is made between the two), respecting a distance of 1 and half metres both in moving around and sitting down, avoiding any form of touching at the peace, using no community sheets or books (which would include hymn books). If you have a temperature of 37.5 or more, if you have 'flu symptoms or breathing difficulties you are not allowed to attend, nor if you have been in contact with anyone who has been Covid-19 positive in the previous days. No doubt further details will be available in church announcements on the website and Facebook page. It is hoped that the service will be streamed online if the technical challenges can be overcome.**
- **THE CHURCH WILL BE CLOSED OUTSIDE SERVICE HOURS**



- Compline was filmed from a new location this week! ST Peter's can just be seen in the background! There will be a Parish Council meeting on Zoom next Friday, May 22nd, at 11 a.m. Please contact the office if you are a member of the PCC and have not received an invitation with the relevant code by then.
- On Thursday the British Embassy held another question and answer session through their Facebook page UKinItaly. A wide range of concerns were expressed, and the answers to as many of these as possible will be given at the same source on Tuesday.
- Apologies for the lack of a hymn this morning. Hymn videos were sent for use but they got lost in the ether! There will be no hymn singing in the services for the

time being as there is currently disagreement among scientists as to the possible increased propagation of infected droplets through singing.

Florence Nightingale and Italy

Tuesday was International Nursing Day, and this year it was also the 200th anniversary of Florence Nightingale's birth. The Italian media have been happily reminding us that she was born in Florence in the Villa Colombaia, and it is therefore a good time to examine her lifelong love for Italy. A number of events had been organized by the Italian Nursing Association in Florence to mark the occasion, but most of them had

to be postponed because of the pandemic. Among the events planned was a conference, "Florence Nightingale and Italy – Two centuries of the Art and Science of Nursing" and the intention of the local authorities had been that

the city of Florence will be, for one day, the House of Nurses, in the

name of Florence Nightingale. Through the involvement of academics, historians, and health professionals the intention had been to outline the particular relationship established by Nightingale throughout the Country, its institutions, and the medical structures of the time. In the Palazzo Vecchio, a reception point was due to be set up for the first day annulment of a commemorative stamp.

Florence was baptised into the Church of England in the year of her birth, and was

raised as an Unitarian, though in a visit to Rome in the winter of 1847-8 she expressed some attraction to the Church of Rome. She had worked in London among the poor with an impressive Roman Catholic priest Edward Manning, but she rejected much of Catholic theology and decided against joining it. Indeed throughout her life her relationship with religion was pragmatic: her letters

suggest that she believed in God but not in all the elements of formal religion. She did read the Bible on a daily basis and gave much of her intellectual energy to



pondering its contents. She once reflected: “For what is mysticism? Is it not the attempt to draw near to God, not by rites or ceremonies but by inward disposition? Is it not merely a hard word for ‘The Kingdom of Heaven is within?’”

Florence Nightingale was a great admirer of the movement that led to the Risorgimento, and in a letter now preserved in Padua, she wrote that “Garibaldi was the grandest hero who ever lived”. Florence attended an Italian unification rally in Rome in 1848. In April 1864 Garibaldi was on a return visit to England, and Florence agreed to receive him. Garibaldi hysteria was rife at the time. He had been welcomed by a crowd of over 100,000 at Charing Cross station, and entertained in all the great houses in London (though not at Buckingham palace). Florence had twice refused to see him. Her previous expressions of admiration had been tempered by his tactics in attempting a march on Rome in 1862, although she had



contributed to the fund for the uprising in Naples. She was

finally persuaded to see him only after friends had insisted that it was her duty to use her influence to prevent Garibaldi further stirring up disturbance in Italy, which would threaten Austrian intervention. Garibaldi drew up at her home in Park Street in Sir Harry Verney’s carriage, supposedly in secret, though “the whole world” seemed to have heard of the meeting. In the course of a long interview, for which she had carefully prepared, Florence

was struck by Garibaldi’s “utter impracticality”. He looked flushed, very ill and worn, talked of caring not for “Repubblica” of “Monarchia” but only for “the Right”. He had a heart of gold”, she reported, “but the head of a schoolboy”. What is more he had departed before she had succeeded in support for sanitary reform.

Even though Florence did not spend much time in Italy the English community in Florence commissioned a symbolic memorial in her honour to claim her for their city, and it can still be found in the first cloister of the basilica di Santa Croce. The epigraph at the base of the memorial reads in its English translation: “Florence Nightingale – the heroine of Crimea – the Lady with the Lamp, as the soldiers called her, having her such a wonderful nurse in the painful hospital nights, and since then a guiding spirit with the virtue of the example to that voluntary work of international pity that became the Red Cross, has in her Florence this memory and affection.” The memorial was created by Francis William Sargent in 1913 and the epigraph was composed by Italian politician and writer Isidoro del Lungo.



Here is a short cartoon film about Florence's links with Italy:

<https://www.facebook.com/ukitaly/videos/553324652285469/>

Sources F. Festini, Florence-nightingale.co.uk

Postscript to the article:

As Father Jonathan Boardman related in a newspaper article in 2014: "Italian church-building illustrates other important Risorgimento connections: the Anglican Christ Church, Naples, was raised on a plot given to the English community by Giuseppe Garibaldi during his brief political seizure of the capital of the soon-to-be defunct Kingdom of the Two Sicilies in 1860; while his military chaplain, himself an ex-RC priest, founded the Ponte Sant'Angelo Methodist church in Rome".

From the Church Times

- AS CHURCHES learned this week that their coronavirus shutdown could end in July, administrators of the nation's cathedrals are beginning to consider what life in the "new normal" will be like. With their doors closed, many have adapted new technology, live-streaming services and linking remotely through apps such as Zoom. But cathedrals have also taken a severe financial hit, with the loss of collections, no visitor spending, and the cancellation of events that often fund a significant proportion of their annual expenditure. "On top of daily worship, events are the bread and butter of what cathedrals do, but they are going to be low down on the list of things relaxed," the Church Commissioners' Head of Bishoprics and Cathedrals, Michael Minta, said. The Commissioners fund each cathedral's dean, two residentiary canons, and some lay staff.
- A RETIRED priest, Canon Douglas Davies, who turns 100 today, has expressed thanks to God and his family for his long life. He is following in the footsteps of Captain Tom Moore (News, 1 May) by celebrating each year of his life with a lap of his house in Swansea, where he lives with his wife of 63 years, Patricia. The sponsored walk will take place on 30 May at 2 p.m. to raise money for the Anglican mission agency USPG. Supporters are invited to join in walking laps at home to help him towards his £2000 target. He has already raised more than £1400.
- DOWNING STREET announced on Tuesday that the next Bishop of Chester is to be the Rt Revd Mark Tanner, at present the Suffragan Bishop of Berwick in the diocese of Newcastle. He has been a member of the General Synod since 2015. Bishop Tanner was born in Canada in 1970. He went to Loughborough Grammar School and has a degree in mathematics from Oxford, a degree in theology and ministry from Durham, and a Master's degree in applied

theology from Liverpool. Before ordination in 1998, he was a youth worker at Holy Trinity, Coventry. He trained for the ministry at Cranmer Hall. Bishop Tanner this week described his appointment as “an honour and a joy at such a key time in the life of our communities, nation, and Church. In Christ, God offers a gift of hope beyond our imagining. There is no greater joy or privilege than enabling others to step into this freedom of life, whether in deeply practical service or beautiful wonder and worship. God is here for us all.”

- Vatican Museums to reopen with precautions: the Vatican Museums, closed since Italy entered lockdown on 9 March, are to reopen to the public later this month — by reservation only, to manage social distancing. Visitors will be required to wear a face mask, and temperatures will be taken on arrival. For the past two months, the Museums have only been accessible through free virtual tours on their website. The Secretary-General of the Vatican City State Governorate, Bishop Fernando Vérgez Alzaga, told Vatican News on Saturday: “Virtual reality can never replace reality. Let us not forget that what brings museums alive are people. To enjoy art, you need your eyes and heart.”

Italy to allow free movement across its regions and unrestricted travel to and from EU countries in the Schengen Area.

The Italian government has approved a decree allowing **unrestricted travel** to and from EU countries in the Schengen area, including Switzerland and Monaco, from 3 June, **without quarantine**, according to reports by Reuters news agency and the Italian media.

The decree, approved in the early hours of Saturday 16 May, represents a major development in Italy's efforts to relaunch its economy, particularly its devastated tourism sector, as the country eases one of the world's most stringent coronavirus lockdowns.

The decree, signed by premier Giuseppe Conte, will also permit travel **between Italy's regions** - which has so far been tightly restricted - from 3 June. However until then, inter-regional travel is not permitted, unless it is for absolute necessity.

In another significant development, from **18 May** it will be possible to travel freely **within your region of residence** without any need to carry the **self-declaration form**.

These new measures are subject to local variations, and to the trend in contagion in the next few weeks.