

The Solemnity of The Ascension

The Ascension refers to the day celebrated 40 days after Easter when Catholics celebrate the fact that Jesus returns to God after being with his disciples after the resurrection. In other words, it is the elevation of [Christ](#) into [heaven](#) by His own power in the presence of His [disciples](#) the fortieth day after His [Resurrection](#). It is narrated in [Mark 16:19](#), [Luke 24:51](#), and in the [first chapter](#) of the [Acts of the Apostles](#). It is a central element of our tradition and is included in the creed recited at Mass each Sunday.

Although, the place of the Ascension is not distinctly stated, it would appear from the [Acts](#) that it was [Mount Olivet](#). Since, after the Ascension, the [disciples](#) are described as returning to [Jerusalem](#) from the mount that is called *Olivet*, which is near [Jerusalem](#), within a [Sabbath day's](#) journey.

[Tradition](#) has [consecrated](#) this site as the Mount of Ascension, and, [Christian piety](#) has memorialized the event by erecting over the site a [basilica](#). [St. Helena](#) built the first memorial, which was destroyed by the [Persians](#) in 614, rebuilt in the eighth century, to be destroyed again, but rebuilt a second time by the [crusaders](#). This the [Moslems](#) also destroyed, leaving only the octagonal structure which encloses the stone said to bear the imprint of the feet of [Christ](#), that is now used as an [oratory](#).

Not only is the fact of the Ascension related in the passages of [Scripture](#) cited above, but, it is also elsewhere predicted and spoken of as an established fact. Thus, in [John 6:63](#), [Christ](#) asks the [Jews](#): "If then you shall see the [Son of Man](#) ascend up where He was before?" and, [20:17](#), He says to [Mary Magdalen](#): "Do not touch Me, for I am not yet ascended to My Father, but, go to My [brethren](#), and say to them: I ascend to My Father and to your Father, to My [God](#) and to your [God](#)." Again, in [Ephesians 4:8-10](#), and, in [Timothy 3:16](#), the Ascension of [Christ](#) is spoken of as an accepted fact.

The language used by the [Evangelists](#) to describe the Ascension must be interpreted according to usage. To say that He was taken up, or, that He ascended, does not necessarily imply that they locate [heaven](#) directly above the earth; no more than the words "sits on the right hand of [God](#)" mean that this is His actual posture. In disappearing from their view, "He was raised up, and, a cloud received Him out of their sight" ([Acts 1:9](#)), and, entering into [glory](#), He dwells with the [Father](#) in the [honor](#) and power denoted by the [Scripture](#) phrase.

Sources:

MLA: Wynne, John. "Ascension." [The Catholic Encyclopedia](#). Vol. 1. New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1907. 16 May 2023 <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01767a.htm>>.

Ecclesiastical Approbation: *Nihil Obstat*. March 1, 1907. Remy Lafort, S.T.D., Censor. *Imprimatur*. +John Cardinal Farley, Archbishop of New York.