

## Opening Reflections for Committees: May 2017

Witness and Fellowship Ministry Team

### The Ascension of Our Lord

*So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by accompanying signs. (Mark 16:19-20)*

We have the same confidence today as the disciples did then. So we, too, can celebrate Christ's ascension with great joy. If Christ had remained on earth, we could not at all times and in all places rejoice that Jesus is present with us as our gracious Savior.

He could not be present in the words preached to us Sunday morning, to give you forgiveness, life, and eternal salvation. He could not be present at our baptisms, to transform them into a washing of regeneration and renewal. We could not receive Holy Communion under the bread and wine, His Body and His Blood. It would not be a source of rest. It would not refresh us. It would not be a source of power where we are strengthened for renewed battle. Jesus would not be a fountain of salvation from which we can all draw.

If it matters at all to us to have Jesus near us always and everywhere, in joy and sorrow, in school, society and in solitude, in peace and in trouble, in life and in death, then we will not mourn over Jesus' departure. Rather, like the disciples, we will celebrate His ascension with great joy today until the Last day.

This is what Ascension Day preaches to the Church. Our lives do not end in night and terror. They do not end in the grave or in the cold silence of death. We are going to the Father! Jesus Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed! Alleluia!

**Prayer:** Grant, we implore You, almighty God, that just as we believe Your only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to have ascended into the heavens, so may we also in heart and mind to heaven ascend, and continually dwell with Him, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen