

**FIRST READING: Acts 1:1-11** Jesus' ascension, promise and commission  
(NIV)

<sup>1</sup> In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach <sup>2</sup> until the day He was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles He had chosen. <sup>3</sup> After His suffering, He presented Himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that He was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. <sup>4</sup> On one occasion, while He was eating with them, He gave them this command: 'Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift My Father promised, which you have heard Me speak about. <sup>5</sup> For John baptised with water, but in a few days you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit.' <sup>6</sup> Then they gathered round Him and asked Him, 'Lord, are You at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?' <sup>7</sup> He said to them: 'It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by His own authority. <sup>8</sup> But 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.' <sup>9</sup> After He said this, He was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid Him from their sight. <sup>10</sup> They were looking intently up into the sky as He was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. <sup>11</sup> '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.'

**PSALM: Psalm 47** (NRSV)

<sup>1</sup> Clap your hands, all you peoples; shout to God with loud songs of joy. <sup>2</sup> For the LORD, the Most High, is awesome, a great king over all the earth. <sup>3</sup> He subdued peoples under us, and nations under our feet. <sup>4</sup> He chose our heritage for us, the pride of Jacob whom He loves. <sup>5</sup> God has gone up with a shout, the LORD with the sound of a trumpet. <sup>6</sup> Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises. <sup>7</sup> For God is the king of all the earth; sing praises with a psalm. <sup>8</sup> God is king over the nations; God sits on His holy throne. <sup>9</sup> The princes of the peoples gather as the people of the God of Abraham. For the shields of the earth belong to God; He is highly exalted.

**SECOND READING: Ephesians 1:15-23** Christ is the supreme Lord over all things *(MEV)*

<sup>15</sup> Therefore I also, after hearing of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, <sup>16</sup> do not cease giving thanks for you, mentioning you in my prayers, <sup>17</sup> so that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, <sup>18</sup> that the eyes of your understanding may be enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of His calling and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance among the saints, <sup>19</sup> and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, <sup>20</sup> which He performed in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, <sup>21</sup> far above all principalities, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. <sup>22</sup> And He put all things in subjection under His feet and made Him the head over all things for the church, <sup>23</sup> which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all things in all ways.

**GOSPEL: Luke 24:44-53** Jesus commissions and blesses the disciples *(NET)*

<sup>44</sup> Then He [Jesus] said to them [His disciples], “These are My words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about Me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms must be fulfilled.” <sup>45</sup> Then He opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures, <sup>46</sup> and said to them, “Thus it stands written that the Christ would suffer and would rise from the dead on the third day, <sup>47</sup> and repentance for the forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup> You are witnesses of these things. <sup>49</sup> And look, I am sending you what My Father promised. But stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.” <sup>50</sup> Then Jesus led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up His hands, He blessed them. <sup>51</sup> Now during the blessing He departed and was taken up into heaven. <sup>52</sup> So they worshiped Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, <sup>53</sup> and were continually in the temple courts blessing God.