

# Virtual Family Prayer Bag



Dear Parent / Carer,  
here is an electronic version of our Prayer Bag  
for The Ascension

## Celebrating The Ascension

Please take some time over the next few days  
to come together, as a family, in prayer.  
This year the Ascension is celebrated on **13<sup>th</sup> May.**



## A Message from Bishop David



The story of the Ascension of Jesus is a rather strange one to the modern mind. I grew up in the use of the space race in the 1960s. We were used to seeing the launch of rockets from Cape Canaveral, eventually taking men to the moon. When I was your age, I used to imagine that perhaps this was the way Jesus left this earth to return to his Father. And then I learnt about space and the universe, and wondered how I could make sense of the story? No I look at this in a very different way. First of all, this day is about Jesus saying goodbye to his friends, and about the apostles saying goodbye to him. There have been several times in my life as a priest, when I have entered into this experience with the parish communities I have been privileged to serve. Just last year, I said goodbye to my diocesan family in Birmingham, in order to become the Bishop of Northampton. It is never easy to say goodbye, but when we do what Jesus asks us to do, then we find these things much easier.

Secondly, Jesus told his friends to go back to Jerusalem and to wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit. We see from the story of the Ascension, that they seemed reluctant to do this. They stand transfixed to the spot, looking up into the sky to where Jesus and gone. It takes a couple of angelic figures to move them on, to encourage them to do what Jesus asked them to do. I think this speaks to each one of us. How difficult it can be at times, to do what Jesus asks of us. Please do not be afraid, Jesus will never ask us to do something that is impossible for us.

And finally, there is something in this story which makes me think very carefully about the meaning of being a disciple of Jesus. The apostles ask our Lord, is this the moment when you are going to restore Israel. What they were really getting out is this, are you going to act in power to drive out the Romans and give us back our land? Jesus, and not for the first time, is annoyed that they do not understand what he is about. I think there are times when we want to God to act in power, not in the way he does act as a servant king, but with worldly authority.

On this great Feast day of the Ascension, may each one of us understand who Jesus is, what the Church is about, and how we can become better disciples in our world today.

✠ David

Rt Revd Dr David J Oakley  
Bishop of Northampton



**Set aside some time in your day  
to gather together for prayer  
Make sure you are all sitting comfortably  
Light a candle**



**In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen**

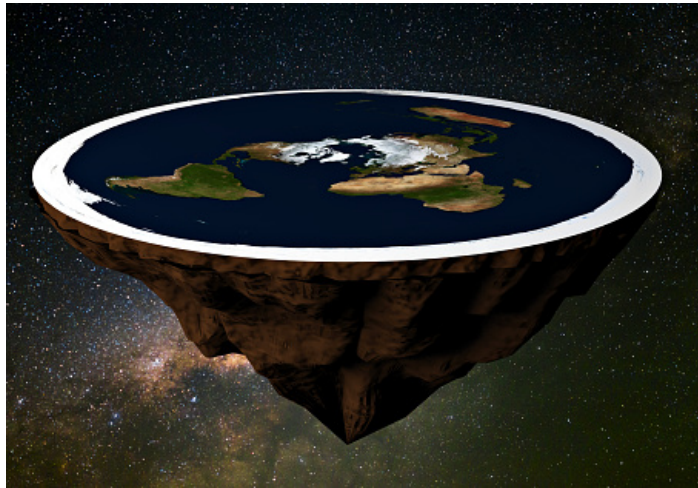
# The Ascension



**On the feast of the ascension  
we think about Jesus  
going back to his Father  
in heaven.**



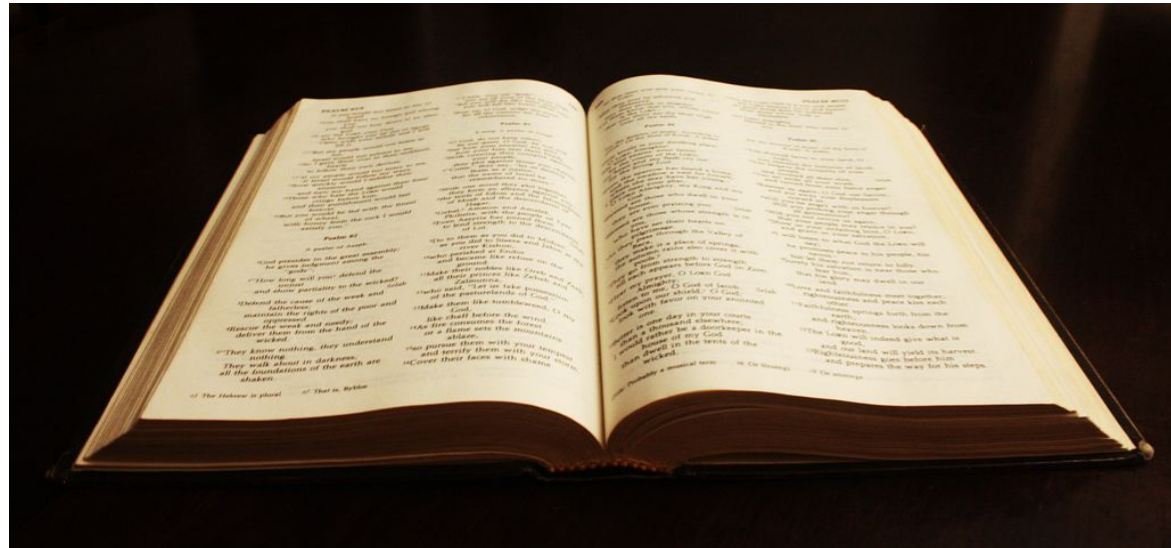
**At the time of Jesus  
people thought the earth was flat.  
They thought humans lived on the earth  
and God was in the sky.**



**In the gospel we hear today  
it says Jesus went up into heaven.  
This means that Jesus was not on the earth any more.  
His death was not the end.  
Jesus went to his Father in heaven.**







# A Reading from the Gospel according to Mark

**Glory to you O Lord**



**Jesus met with his friends one last time.  
He blessed them and said to them:  
'Go out to the whole world;  
Proclaim the good news to all creation.'**



**And so the Lord Jesus,  
after he had spoken to them,  
was taken up into heaven:  
there at the right hand of God  
he took his place  
while they went out  
and preached the good news everywhere.**

**The Gospel of the Lord  
Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ**

**Let us pray:**

**Thank you Jesus for your great love for us**

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

**Thank you Jesus for your promise to be with us always.**

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**



**Thank you Jesus for your trust in God our Father**

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

**God our Father help us to trust in you always**

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

**Amen**



**Jesus you are our Lord**

**Help us to live as you have taught us.**



**Jesus you went back to your Father in heaven.**

**Help us to love as you did .**

**Jesus you are with us now**

**Help us to tell everyone the good news.**

**Amen**

**May Jesus Christ,  
our ascended Lord, bless us.  
May his promise to be with us  
remain in our hearts.  
May we take his message  
to all those we meet.  
Amen**



**The Ascension also celebrates  
the mission  
which Jesus left to his friends.**





**Jesus asked his friends  
to remember how he had lived –  
what he had said and done  
because he wanted them to live in the same way.  
Jesus asked his friends  
to carry on his work after he had gone back  
to his Father in heaven.**



**We too are friends of Jesus  
and we try to live just as he asked.  
Jesus wants us to carry on  
building his kingdom of love  
by working for peace and justice and truth.  
A kingdom where people  
love and care for each other  
and no one is left out.**



**We can't see Jesus in the sky  
but we can see him in those around us.  
Our family and friends  
and our brothers and sisters all over the world.  
By caring for them  
and loving them we love Jesus.**



# How can we live as friends of Jesus?

Helping at home  
Sharing our things

Telling the truth

Loving others

Serving

Reaching out to others



What else can you do  
to live as a friend of Jesus?