

# Dear Padre,

## Why should I believe Jesus is God, the Messiah?

**J**esus was a historical figure whose miracles and wise teachings were witnessed by other reliable historical figures—the apostles and other disciples. He demonstrated miraculous powers through physical healings, dislodging demons, and command over nature, such as walking on water and instantly calming a storm. Most importantly, reliable witnesses saw the risen Jesus in a glorified body after his death on the cross. Rather than deny the truth of what they saw and learned, they submitted to gruesome martyrdoms.

Our world needs a Messiah. Despite the philosophies humans have adopted throughout history, we find we are our own worst enemy. Our egoism and pride have led to conflict and inequalities, negligence and hurt. We try following worldly leaders who promise us more, but they can't rid us of the inner defect of our selfishness. Neither economic success nor military conquest bring lasting happiness. We long for more. We long to know the purpose of life, to live without dying. We long to know God.

Jesus is the Messiah we need. His teaching centers on God's love for us and the love among people as the binding force for human hearts. Jesus taught that God loves his creations so much that he forgives people even for the ultimate sin: crucifying Jesus. His plans for eternity are that we, too, shall have a resurrection in a perfected body.

The truths Jesus exemplified and taught resonate perfectly with the deepest desires of the human heart.



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### A WORD FROM Pope Francis

What is the secret of a happy life? Recognizing Jesus, but Jesus as the living God, not as a statue. Because it is not important to know that Jesus was great in history....what matters is the place I give him in my life, the place I give to Jesus in my heart.

ANGELUS, JUNE 29, 2020



## Our Parish Community

May 29, 2022

The Ascension of the Lord (C)

Acts 1:1–11

Eph 1:17–23 or Heb 9:24–28; 10:19–23

Lk 24:46–53

## How Far Is Up?

**I**t depends upon your understanding of cosmology, the religious explanation of the nature and structure of the universe. If Jesus ascended into heaven, how far up did he go? This also depends upon your understanding of cosmology. These are not foolish questions. We might not be experts in the field of cosmology, but many of us know a bit about galaxies, spacetime, and black holes, if only from *Star Trek*. So with this minimal cosmological knowledge, how should we understand Acts 1:9 when “a cloud took [Jesus] from their sight”? Did he just keep going up?

In the Letter to the Ephesians, Paul refers to Jesus' ascension, but he does not describe a mystifying event, as the Gospel reading does. Instead, he speaks of Jesus' exaltation at God's right hand. Perhaps it was fitting that Jesus ascended into the sky a little way, emphasizing that what occurred was more than mere physical exaltation. Rather, it is a way of stating that Jesus has now achieved honor and glory far beyond anything that is human, earthly, or created. He now enjoys divine glorification.

Still, even Paul uses metaphorical language when he says that Jesus sits at God's right hand in heaven. We know that heaven is more than a place but is also a state of total fulfillment. We also know that to be seated at the host's right hand means to be awarded the place of honor at the banquet. So, Paul is saying that Jesus enjoys total fulfillment in the place of honor next to his Father, where he is now praised as the beginning and end of all that is. This is reason to rejoice.

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA



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As he blessed them he parted from them and was taken up to heaven.

They did him homage and then returned to Jerusalem with great joy.

LUKE 24:51–52

### FOR Reflection

- ★ Pray the responsorial psalm today.
- ★ At his ascension, Jesus said his followers would be his witnesses to the ends of the earth. Are you one?