

Today's reading is the story of Jesus leaving his disciples and going up to heaven. It's right at the beginning of the book called the Acts of the Apostles.

Acts 1:6-14 International Children's Bible (ICB)

Jesus Is Taken Up into Heaven

The apostles were all together. They asked Jesus, "Lord, are you at this time going to give the kingdom back to Israel?"

Jesus said to them, "The Father is the only One who has the authority to decide dates and times. These things are not for you to know. But the Holy Spirit will come to you. Then you will receive power. You will be my witnesses—in Jerusalem, in all of Judea, in Samaria, and in every part of the world."

After he said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up. A cloud hid him from their sight. As he was going, they were looking into the sky. Suddenly, two men wearing white clothes stood beside them. They said, "Men of Galilee, why are you standing here looking into the sky? You saw Jesus taken away from you into heaven. He will come back in the same way you saw him go."

A New Apostle Is Chosen

Then they went back to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives. (This mountain is about half a mile from Jerusalem.) When they entered the city, they went to the upstairs room where they were staying. Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Simon (known as the Zealot), and Judas son of James were there. They all continued praying together. Some women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, and Jesus' brothers were also there with the apostles.

Reflection:

So in our story today, Jesus is lifted up into the clouds, and the apostles are standing there with their mouths open, staring up at the sky.

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IN PROCESS - DO NOT PRINT

They thought Jesus was back to stay, but...guess not.

They thought there was going to be a new kingdom in Israel, but...guess not.

Can you imagine them there, staring at the clouds, wondering..."So, what happens now?"

I think it's really appropriate that we read this story on graduation weekend, because graduation is another time where you find yourself thinking..."So, what next?"

But whether you're graduating or not, this is a moment where Jesus tosses the ball to the apostles - and metaphorically, to us - and says, "OK, it's your turn now - take your best shot!"

So...what's next for you?

Perhaps what's next for you is being stuck right where you are for a few weeks...or months...That's too bad. But, please remember, the apostles had that happen too. They sat in an upstairs room in someone's house, waiting for the Holy Spirit to inspire them. (The Holy Spirit does come, but...that's next week)

But while you're stuck, that doesn't mean you have to do nothing! A time when you're stuck is a fantastic time for dreaming and planning!

Prayer activity: Vision Board!

Sometimes we need to put our plans and our dreams on paper, where we can see them and think about them when things are not-so-great.

Get out a great big piece of paper or posterboard - the biggest you have on hand!

Spend some time thinking, and write or draw (or cut-and-paste photos) the answers to these questions:

Where do you want to go?

What do you want to do?

What's important to you?

How will you carry Jesus' message of Love to the places you go, and the things you do?

Need a little inspiration while you create your vision?

Here's a link to the Dr. Seuss book, "Oh, the Places You'll Go!"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3U60jboHHFs>

Let's end with a prayer.

Dear God,

Thank you for sending Jesus to us, so that we could learn to follow him.

Thank you for taking Him home, so that we could learn to lead.

Help us to listen to the spirit, and find the work we are meant to do.

Amen.