



Ascension

Today's readings reinforce the Church's mission on earth and Christ's eventual return at the end of time.

The 1st reading displays Jesus' 3 promises to his apostles: the gift of the Holy Spirit, the spread of their witness to the world, and the eventual return of Jesus. The kingdom of God in the synoptics is God's coming reign, while in Acts it is the content of preaching about Jesus.

In the 2nd reading, Ephesus was the roman capital of the Asia province. It housed one of the 7 wonders of the ancient world: the temple of Diana/Artemis. In Acts 19 is the description of the serious conflict between this sect and the Gospel of Paul. "far above every principality, authority . . ." indicates all supposed rival powers whether material or spiritual. This is the only place in the letters of Paul where Christ is called the head of the Church.

In the Gospel we see the expanded version of the end of Mark's Gospel. While the prior verses describe the foreboding and disbelief of the disciples, this ending sees the obvious confidence that Jesus inspires.