

The Seventh Sunday of Easter

A Story of Transformation

Acts 1:6-14

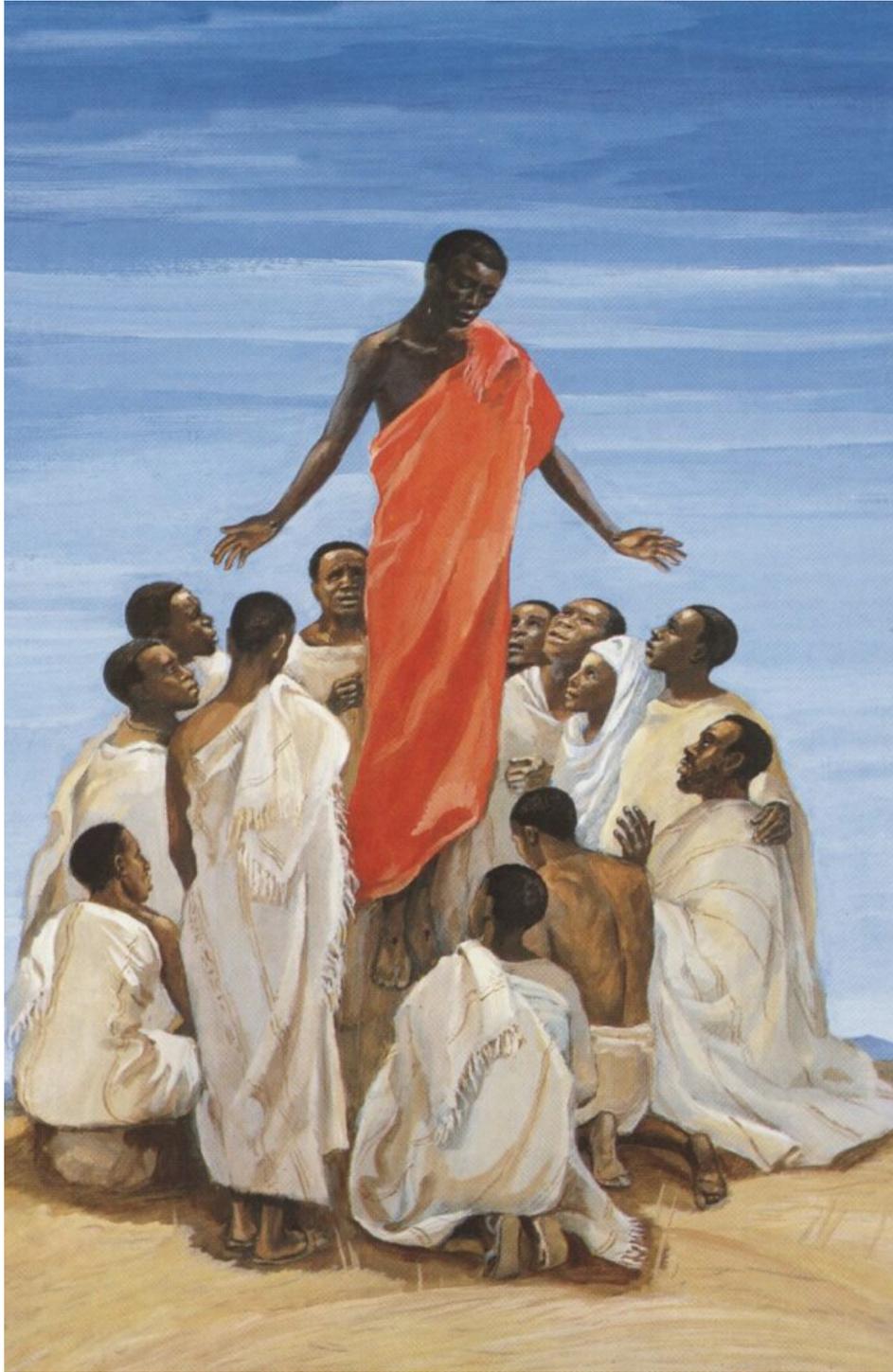
The Seventh Sunday of Easter

Analysis by Glenn L. Monson

6 So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" 7 He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." 9 When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. 10 While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. 11 They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

12 Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. 13 When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying: Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of[a] James. 14 All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother

of Jesus, as well as his brothers.



JESUS MAFA. The Ascension, from Art in the Christian Tradition, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-ima>

gmlink.pl?RC=48398 [retrieved May 15, 2023].
Original source:
<http://www.librairie-emmanuel.fr> (contact
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<https://www.librairie-emmanuel.fr/contact>).

He knows that our thoughts are not his thoughts, but his promised Holy Spirit will change that. As Christ is lifted up, so are we: lifted from sin, lifted from unbelief, lifted from despair.

DIAGNOSIS: Dragged Down

Step 1: Initial Diagnosis (External Problem): Self-pitying

We have, in this passage, the names of all the apostles. If they all had titles attached to them like Simon the Zealot, what might they be? Peter the Betrayer? Philip the Skeptic? Thomas the Doubter? We all glom onto identities that are unhelpful, causing us to live in places that leave us hopeless and destitute. We ask, "Is this the time you will finally restore us to glory?" We wallow in our self-pity and shame.

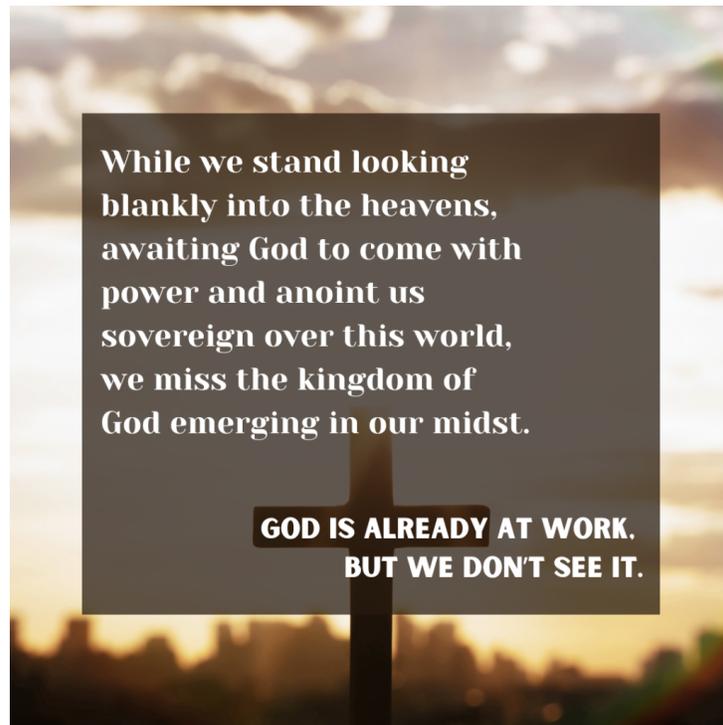
Step 2: Advanced Diagnosis (Internal Problem): Power-hungry

We trust in the kingdoms of this world, not the emerging reign of God. "Just give me some power, Lord," we say. "Give me some clout. Give me the inside information on when your kingdom will be restored. I will be able to handle it."

Step 3: Final Diagnosis (Eternal Problem): Blind

While we stand looking blankly into the heavens, awaiting God to come with power and anoint us sovereign over this world, we miss the kingdom of God emerging in our midst. God is already at work, but we don't see it. Lost in our shame, despair, and anger at God's refusal to grant us our every wish, we don't even

recognize God's messengers when they stand before us.



From Canva

PROGNOSIS: Lifted up

Step 4: Initial Prognosis (Eternal Solution): Christ Lifted Up

Despite our ignorance, blindness, and sin, Christ is lifted up before us. He is lifted up first on the Cross, and then again as the Risen One lifted from the tomb, and finally, now lifted up on high. He knows that our thoughts are not his thoughts, but his promised Holy Spirit will change that. As Christ is lifted up, so are we: lifted from sin, lifted from unbelief, lifted from despair.

Step 5: Advanced Prognosis (Internal Solution): Holy Spirit at Work

We are given the promise of power, but not the kind of power we expected; it is the power of the Holy Spirit that transforms us

from self-pitying weaklings into bold witnesses to Christ's death and resurrection. Our fears melt away as we hear the promise that this Jesus will return. Our only job now is to share his story to the ends of the earth.

Step 6: Final Prognosis (External Solution): The Church Emerging

We become the Church, meeting in prayer and service, sharing the joys and sorrows of this world, and exhorting one another to love and good works. We are not simply individuals, left to our own devices, burdened with our past sins and chronic weaknesses; we are the Church. We are witnesses to the Resurrection. We are the ones called to bring the good news to the world.