

Reflections on the Ascension

ITS HISTORY

The pastor should explain the sense of the Article more at length by detailing the history of the Ascension,⁷ of which the Evangelist St. Luke has left us an orderly description in the Acts of the Apostles.⁸

GREATNESS OF THIS MYSTERY

In this exposition he should observe, in the first place, that all other mysteries refer to the Ascension as to their end and find in it their perfection and completion; for as all the mysteries of religion commence with the Incarnation of our Lord, so His sojourn on earth terminates with His Ascension.

Moreover the other Articles of the Creed which regard Christ the Lord show His great humility and lowliness. Nothing can be conceived more humble, nothing more lowly, than that the Son of God assumed our weak human nature, and suffered and died for us. But nothing more magnificently, nothing more admirably, proclaims His sovereign glory and divine majesty than what is contained in the present and in the preceding Article, in which we declare that He rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father.

REASONS OF THE ASCENSION

When the pastor has explained these truths, he should next accurately show why Christ the Lord ascended into heaven.

First of all, He ascended because the glorious kingdom of the highest heavens, not the obscure abode of this earth, presented a suitable dwelling place for Him whose body, rising from the tomb, was clothed with the glory of immortality.

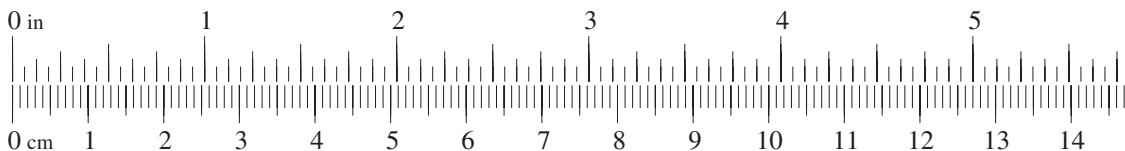
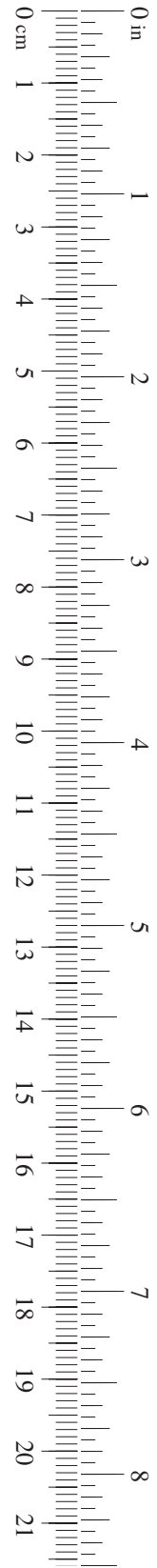
He ascended, however, not only to possess the throne of glory and the kingdom which He had merited by His blood, but also to attend to whatever regards our salvation.

Again, He ascended to prove thereby that His *kingdom is not of this world*.⁹ For the kingdoms of this world are earthly and transient, and are based upon wealth and the power of the flesh; but the kingdom of Christ is not, as the Jews expected, earthly, but spiritual

⁷ On the Ascension of Christ see Summa Theol. 3a. Ivii. lviii.

⁸ Acts i.

⁹ John xviii. 36.



Please check the horizontal and vertical rulers on this page against a hardware ruler to ensure that the content of this page has not been stretched or shrunk during printing.