

### Ascension of Christ (5<sup>th</sup> May – Christian)

Forty days after His Resurrection, Jesus ascended into heaven. During this period between his Resurrection and Ascension, He actually gave the primacy He had promised to Peter, as we read in John 21. The many events between His resurrection and ascension preclude the theory that He ascended on Easter. His ascension does not mean that heaven is somewhere up in space. This was a way of making clear that He was leaving the present mode of existence. St. Paul in Colossians 3:1 urges us to live our lives now as if we had already died, had risen, and had ascended with Him. In a mystical sense we have done that, in that our Head has done that. In the physical sense it is still in the future.

He ascended to receive the glory due to Him as conqueror of sin and death (Philippians 2:8-11); to be our Mediator and advocate with the Father (Hebrews 9:24); to send the Holy Spirit as He had promised at the Last Supper (John 16:7); and to prepare a place for us as He also promised (John 14:2).

Now He is seated at the Father's right hand, which means that, as He said, "all power has been given to Me in Heaven and on Earth (Matthew 28:18)". He always had that power as God, but now He exercises it as Man, as King of the Universe, with His Mother beside Him as Queen of the Universe.

As God He is everywhere, but not as Man, though He is present on earth most widely in the Holy Eucharist, even as man.

Besides this real bodily presence in the Eucharist, Christ is present on earth in other, lesser ways. Vatican II explained the various forms of presence, in the Constitution on the Liturgy, # 7: "Christ is always present in His Church, especially in liturgical actions. He is present in the Sacrifice of the Mass in the person of the priest; 'He is the same one, now offering by the ministry of priests, who then offered Himself on the Cross [citing the Council of Trent].' But He is most greatly present under the Eucharistic species. He is present by His power in the Sacraments, so that when anyone baptizes, Christ Himself baptizes. He is present in His word, for He speaks when the Sacred Scriptures are read in the Church. He is present, finally, when the Church prays and sings the Psalms, He who promised 'Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in their midst'" (Matthew 18:20).

#### **Why did Christ remain on earth forty days after His Resurrection?**

Christ remained on earth forty days after His Resurrection to prove that He had truly risen from the dead and to complete the instruction of the apostles.

- (a) Saint Paul tells us that Christ, after His Resurrection, appeared frequently to the apostles and to many others.
- (b) Christ ascended into heaven from Mount Olivet, a hill outside Jerusalem.

#### **What do we mean when we say that Christ sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty?**

When we say that Christ sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty, we mean that Our Lord as God is equal to the Father, and that as man He shares above all the saints in the glory of His Father and exercises for all eternity the supreme authority of a king over all creatures.

- (a) Even as man, Christ of Himself has dominion over all creation. His Kingship rests on the fact that His human nature is immediately united to the divine Person of the Son of God, and on the fact that He redeemed all men with His precious blood.
- (b) On earth Christ exercises His kingly authority in spiritual matters through His Church. His Kingship extends also over temporal and civil matters. *source* : [www.newadvent.org](http://www.newadvent.org)

## FESTIVALS IN MAY 2005

### EASWARAMMA DAY (6<sup>th</sup> May – Sai Devotees)

Easwaramma is the mother of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. This was not the name given to her by her parents. But after her marriage, Kondama Raju (Baba's grandfather), being one of wisdom and blessed with a vision of the future, started calling her Easwaramma (mother of *Eashwara*). She was christened as 'Namagiramma' at the time of her birth. However, Kondama Raju told her that Easwaramma was the most appropriate name for her, as he knew that she was going to become the mother of *Eashwara* (God). Easwaramma was born in such a poor family that she did not even have proper food to eat. All that she had to eat was Ragi Sankati (gruel prepared from a coarse grain). Easwaramma was illiterate.

Mother Easwaramma had noble desires. As Sathya Sai Baba's glory began to spread everywhere, she went to him one day and said, "I am pained to see small children of our village walking all the way to Bukkapatnam to attend school. Please construct a small school." Conforming to her wish, Baba established a small school.

After some time, she wanted a small hospital also to be established here. She said she could not bear to see the mothers taking the trouble of carrying their children to Bukkapatnam for medical treatment. Accordingly, Baba got a small hospital built. The small school that he established has become a big university today. The small hospital that was constructed has now become a super specialty hospital. Her last wish was to provide drinking water to the village. She pointed out that the women had to take great pains to draw water from deep wells, which had almost dried up. Baba immediately provided drinking water to the village. Now under Sri Sathya Sai Water Supply Project, Baba has provided drinking water to the entire district of Anantapur which is extended further.

**6<sup>th</sup> May 1972** was the day when Easwaramma, left her mortal coil. Every year since then, the day is observed as Easwaramma Day by the Sri Sathya Sai Service Organisations worldwide.

This day is marked by charity to the poor, with Baba distributing food, clothes and blankets to the weaker sections of the society. Baba emphasises on the need to love and respect one's parents. He also explains how much Mother Easwaramma used to love Baba and His Devotees when she was alive. On this day, He reminds and elaborates on the greatness of Motherhood and their influential role in shaping the lives of their children.

Mother is given the utmost importance in human life. There may be a wicked son, but not a wicked mother. It is because of the noble feelings of the mothers that sons become virtuous, intelligent, attain exalted positions and earn name and fame. The *Vedas* declare: *Mathru Devo Bhava, Pithru Devo Bhava, Acharya Devo Bhava, Atithi Devo Bhava* (worship the mother as God, the father as God, the preceptor as God and the guest as God). The mother fosters you and nourishes you. It is she who knows your choices and preferences, and fulfils all your needs. Therefore, you should be grateful to your mother always. Though you cannot see Rama, Krishna, Siva and Vishnu, you are worshipping them because you believe in scriptures and what the elders say. However, how is that you are forgetting your parents who are responsible for your progress in life? First and foremost, you should show gratitude to your parents, love them and respect them. Your blood, your food, your head, your money are all the gifts of your parents. You do not receive these gifts directly from God. All that is related to God is only indirect experience. It is only the parents whom you can see directly and experience their love. So, consider your parents as God. God will be pleased and will manifest before you only when you love and respect your parents.

It is the mother who teaches you the sacred principles like love, compassion, forbearance, tolerance and sacrifice. Mother shows the father, father takes you to the preceptor and preceptor directs you to God. That is why among mother, father, preceptor and God, mother comes first." Therefore, the significance of Easwaramma day is that it is celebrated as Children's Day, a day when children are to be reminded of the ideal, and a day when she is portrayed as an ideal. No one can escape death, but everyone's aim should be to remind oneself at the time of death of the Divine or have some holy or sacred thoughts.

Sri Sathya Sai Service Organisation, UK

## FESTIVALS IN MAY 2005

*“Today we are celebrating Easwaramma Day to propagate the glory of motherhood. The prayers of mothers sustain the world. A woman's prayer is more powerful than a thousand prayers of men because women are pure and tender-hearted. Never cause displeasure to your mother. Never hurt her feelings. Then God will help you in all your endeavours. One calls one's country motherland and not fatherland. Thus, mother is given an exalted position in the world. Consider your country as your own mother and work for its progress. Under any circumstances, do not cause any harm to your mother and motherland. This is the significance and main teaching of today's celebration.*

*Once you become the recipient of your mother's love, you do not need anything else. You may be aware or not, but even after 30 years of her passing away, Mother Easwaramma continues to express her love for Baba in a number of ways. Even to this day, she moves around in her physical body. At times, she comes to Me and expresses her motherly concern for My well being. Once she cautioned Me not to accept handkerchief from everybody. I told her that I had to accept when people offered it with devotion. She said, "Baba, no doubt there are crores of such noble persons. However, there are also a few evil-minded persons who may smear poison on the handkerchief and offer it to you. This can prove dangerous when You use it to wipe Your lips." I promised her that I would follow her advice. Even to this day, she makes her appearance in My room. The boys who sleep in My room too have witnessed this. Whenever she comes and talks to Me, they sit up on their beds and listen”*

***Divine Discourse: 6th May 2001***

## FESTIVALS IN MAY 2005

### **Pentecost (Whitsunday) (15<sup>th</sup> May – Christian)**

A feast of the universal Church which commemorates the Descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles, fifty days after the Resurrection of Christ, it is the ancient Jewish festival called the "feast of weeks" or Pentecost (Exodus 34:22; Deuteronomy 16:10). *Whitsunday* is so called from the white garments which were worn by those who were baptised during the vigil; *Pentecost* ("Pfungsten" in German), is the Greek for "the fiftieth" (day after Easter).

Whitsunday, as a Christian feast, dates back to the first century. Pentecost is the festival when Christians celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit. It is celebrated on the Sunday 50 days after Easter.

Pentecost is regarded as the birthday of the Christian church, and the start of the church's mission to the world.

The Holy Spirit is the third part of the Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit that is the way Christians understand God.

#### **Celebrating Pentecost**

Pentecost is a happy festival. Ministers in church often wear robes with red in the design as a symbol of the flames in which the Holy Spirit came to earth.

Hymns sung at Pentecost take the Holy Spirit as their theme, and include: Come down O Love Divine, Come Holy Ghost our souls inspire, Breathe on me breath of God, O Breath of Life, come sweeping through us, There's a spirit in the air and Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me.

#### **Pentecost Symbols**

The symbols of Pentecost are those of the Holy Spirit and include: flames, wind, the breath of God and a Dove.

#### **The first Pentecost**

Pentecost comes from a Jewish harvest festival called Shavuot.

The apostles were celebrating this festival when the Holy Spirit descended on them.

It sounded like a very strong wind, and it looked like tongues of fire.

The apostles then found themselves speaking in foreign languages, inspired by the Holy Spirit.

People passing by at first thought that they must be drunk, but the apostle Peter told the crowd that the apostles were full of the Holy Spirit

#### **What do we learn from Pentecost?**

Each one of us is given the grace and gift of the Holy Spirit when baptized as children. However, baptism and the Holy Spirit mean nothing to us if we do not feel their presence in our daily life. To be baptized and given the Holy Spirit is one thing and to live one's faith in practice is another.

How often do we feel the presence of the Holy Spirit in our life? Do we attempt to seek His wisdom and guidance before making any serious decisions in our life? St. Paul reminds us: "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God?" (I Corinthians 6:19) If we listen faithfully to the call of the Holy Spirit, we shall most certainly walk in the steps of our Lord and be the faithful people God has called us to be. Consequently, in a world of challenge and constant change, the Holy Spirit will remain with us, the Holy Church and keep us always on the path that is pleasing to God which leads us to His heavenly kingdom. *Source: BBC,*

[www.Syriacsundayschool.org](http://www.Syriacsundayschool.org)

Sri Sathya Sai Service Organisation, UK