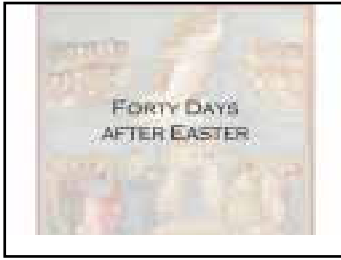
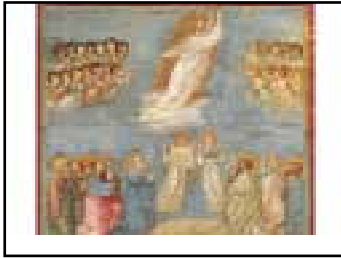


40 Days After Easter

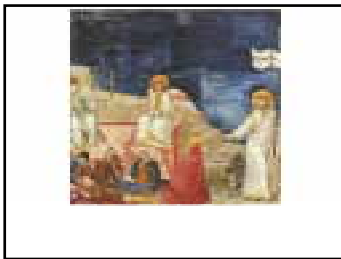


'Scenes from the Life of Christ: 22. Ascension', GIOTTO di Bondone



What is going on?

'Scenes from the Life of Christ: 22. Ascension', GIOTTO di Bondone



It is 40 days since the disciples saw Jesus risen from the dead.

'Scenes from the Life of Christ: 21. Resurrection (Noli me tangere)'
GIOTTO di Bondone



Since then, Jesus has appeared to his disciples several times.

'The Three Marys at the Tomb', DUCCIO di Buoninsegna



He has talked to them. He has walked on the earth. He is resurrected.

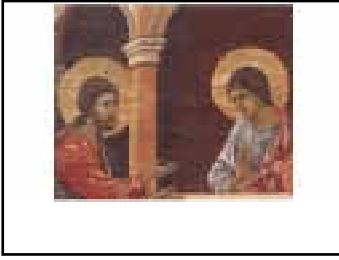
'The Incredulity of Saint Thomas', CARAVAGGIO



So what is happening to him now?

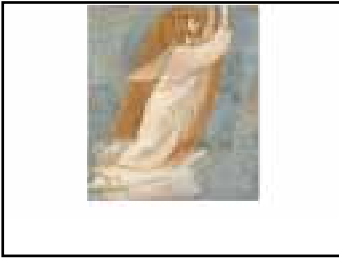
'Scenes from the Life of Christ: 22. Ascension', GIOTTO di Bondone

40 Days After Easter



In the Book of Acts, Luke tells how Jesus is with his disciples at Olivet, a day's journey from Jerusalem. He asks them to return to Jerusalem and stay there as witnesses to him. Although he will not be there with them, he will send a new power to strengthen them.

'Appearance While the Apostles are at Table' Detail, DUCCIO di Buoninsegna



And then, in the words of the Bible, "Once he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight."

'Scenes from the Life of Christ: 22. Ascension' Detail, GIOTTO di Bondone



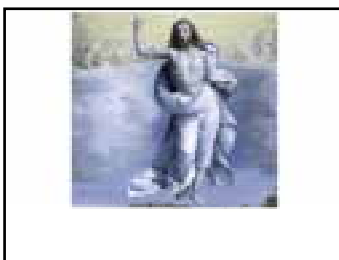
How extraordinary for them! First Jesus dies, then they see him again – risen – and then he disappears once more. They gaze upwards to the traditional site of heaven.

'Ascension of Jesus' Detail, Unknown.



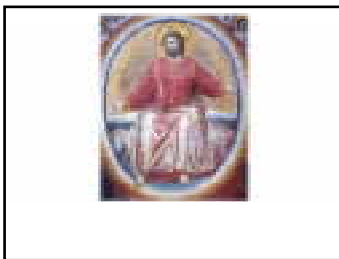
But looking to heaven will not get them very far. Two men dressed in white give a clue to what has happened. "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall come again in the same way as you have seen him go."

'Ascension of Jesus' Detail, Unknown.



Jesus' ascension is the transition from Jesus as an earthly prophet, teaching with his disciples, to Jesus as Christ in Majesty, the King of Heaven.

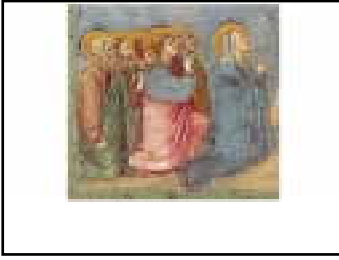
'Ascension of Christ' Detail, GAROFALO



Jesus, who has triumphed over death, can now be with his disciples in a new way. He will be with God the Father.

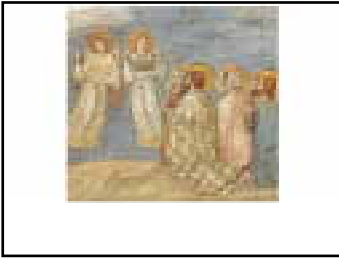
'Last Judgement', Detail, GIOTTO di Bondone

40 Days After Easter



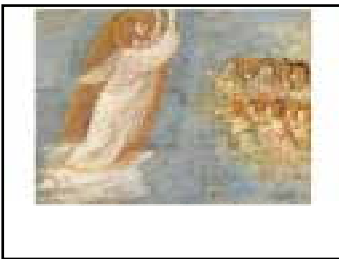
Imagine what those disciples might have felt like. Confused? Happy? Reassured? Sad? Confident? Amazed? Probably all these and more.

'Scenes from the Life of Christ: 22. Ascension' Detail, GIOTTO di Bondone



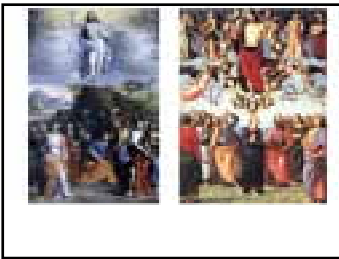
But they knew that Jesus would always be with them and that what he had said while he was alive would come to pass.

'Scenes from the Life of Christ: 22. Ascension' Detail, GIOTTO di Bondone



Ascension Day is when the church celebrates Jesus finishing work in his earthly form. Ascension Day is always 40 days after Easter – and as Easter Day is always on a Sunday, Ascension Day is always on a Thursday.

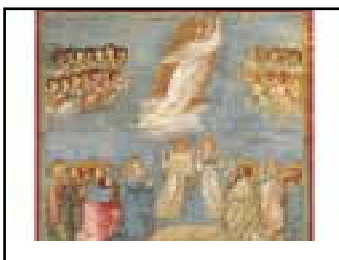
'Scenes from the Life of Christ: 22. Ascension' Detail, GIOTTO di Bondone



Because heaven is traditionally seen as up in the sky, pictures of the Ascension are often very literal – like this picture, painted over 500 years ago. But however you visualise it, Christians believe that the risen Jesus reigns in heaven as Saviour and King.

'Ascension of Christ', GAROFALO,

'The Ascension of Christ', PERUGINO Pietro.



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