



On Ascension Day, we celebrate Jesus Christ ascending into heaven after His death, burial and resurrection.

Also known as Ascension Thursday, it occurs on the Thursday, 40 days after Easter. The Feast of Ascension is now, by and large, celebrated in the Western Church on the following Sunday.

The first great **Novena** (meaning *nine*) of Prayer occurred in the upper room in Jerusalem, when the disciples returned to the city after witnessing the Ascension. Jesus had instructed them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for what the Father had promised.

On the Mount of Olives, just before He ascended, He told them,
'*you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and then you will be my witnesses not only in Jerusalem but throughout Judaea and Samaria, and indeed to the ends of the earth*'

And so, as many as 120 people gathered around Mary, His mother, and prayed for nine days.

In the Novena to the Holy Spirit, which commences on the Friday, the day after Ascension Thursday, and ends on the Saturday, vigil of Pentecost, nine days in all, we too gather with Mary to pray for a fresh outpouring of His Spirit on my life, family, Church and world.