

Scripture Study

Seventh Sunday of Easter– Cycle C



Opening prayer

Acts 7:55-60

(Ps 97:1-2, 6-7, 9)

Revelation 22:12-14,16-17,20

John 17:20-26

Overview of the Gospel:

- This Sunday's Gospel takes place at the end of Jesus' Last Supper discourse found in chapters 14 through 17 of John's Gospel. The entirety of Chapter 17 is known as Jesus' High Priestly Prayer. Immediately after this prayer, Jesus and his disciples will set out for the Garden of Gethsemane and to his betrayal by Judas.
- This prayer, the longest extended prayer found in the Gospels, has three main parts: [1] Jesus offers his coming sacrifice to his Father (verses 1-5); [2] He pleads for the preservation of his disciples, that none of them be lost (verses 6-19); [3] He pleads to God the Father for the unity of the universal Church, "they" and "them" referring to the Apostles and all who will come to faith because of them. It is this last part of this prayer which is this Sunday's Gospel reading.

Questions:

- Who is the focus of Jesus' prayer in this passage? Toward what end? What kind of unity does Jesus desire (Ephesians 4:4-8, 10-13)? Why does Jesus want all Christians to be in union with each other? What does our disunity do to the world's belief in Jesus? How does Jesus indicate that the issue of unity be addressed (verse 23)?
- What is the source and pattern of the Church's unity (John 17:11, 21-22)? What kind of unity exists between the Father and Jesus that we should imitate?
- How are your prayers for others like and unlike Jesus' prayer? Do your prayers reflect the short term urgent, or the long term important needs that people have? What can you apply to your prayer skills from Jesus prayer in John 17?
- What does Jesus' *ultimate* wish (verse 24) reveal about his love for us? This week, whom have you glorified by the way you live (verses 22, 24)? How so?

Catechism of the Catholic Church: §§ 260, 877, 820, 2749-51, 729

Closing prayer

Christ prays for us as our priest, he prays in us as our Head, he is the object of our prayers as our God. –St. Augustine

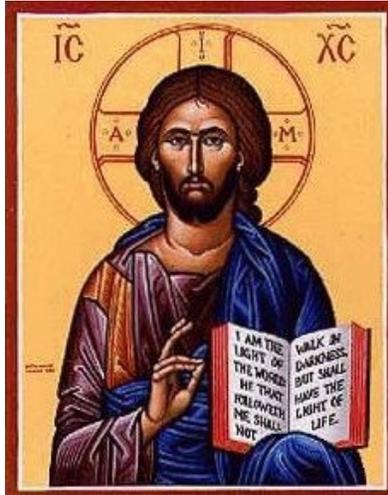
Remember to read and meditate on the daily Mass readings found in the bulletin!

“May they become perfectly one”

Scripture: John 17:20-26
[alternate reading for the Feast of the Ascension of the Lord: Luke 24:46-53]

"I do not pray for these only, but also for those who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one; even as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory which you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to behold my glory which you've given me in your love for me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world has not known you, but I have known you; and these know that you have sent me. I made known to them your name, and I will make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."

Meditation: Who is your brother and sister in Christ? On the eve of his sacrifice, when Jesus celebrated his last supper with his apostles, he prayed for their unity and for the unity of all who would believe in him and become his disciples. God desires unity for all of his people, for married couples, families, communities, and churches across every land and nation. Sadly division and strife is



often the result of personal pride, sin, prejudice, and the failure to love, forgive and reconcile. That is why prayer is so necessary, both for safeguarding unity and for healing and restoration wherever unity has been broken.

Jesus knew the weakness of his disciples, their competitive spirit to see who would rank first, their dislike for Samaritans and others who were not of their own company and the fear that would scatter them and make them deny their Lord when Jesus' enemies arrested him in the Garden of Gethsemane and nailed him to the cross on Calvary. John tells us that Jesus loved his own to the very end (John 13:1). Nothing could break nor diminish the love he had for them, not even betrayal and rejection. As disciples of Jesus we are called to love and lay down our lives for all who believe in him. If we are willing to die for our brothers and sisters in Christ, how much more should we strive to live in harmony, love, and unity with one another?

Jesus' high priestly prayer at the last supper is directed towards all who will come after him and follow him as his disciples. In a special way Jesus prays here for us that as members of his body the church we would be united in one heart and mind as he and his Father are one. The unity of Jesus and his Father is a unity of mind and heart, mutual love and trust, honor and respect. Because Jesus loved us first and united us in baptism we are called to live in a unity of love. Jesus' prayer on the eve of his sacrifice shows the great love and trust he has in his beloved disciples. He knows they would abandon him in his hour of trial, yet he entrusted to them the great task of spreading his name throughout the world and to the end of the ages. The Lord entrust us with the same mission – to make him known and loved by all. Jesus died and rose again that all might be one as he and the Father are one. Do you love and accept all baptized Christians as your brothers and sisters in Christ?

"Lord God, have mercy on your people and heal the divisions in the body of Christ. May all Christian people throughout the world attain the unity for which Jesus prayed on the eve of his sacrifice. Renew in us the power of the Spirit that we may be a sign of that unity and a means of its growth. Increase in us a fervent love for all our brothers and sisters in Christ."

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