

Scripture Study

Seventh Sunday in Easter, Year B



Opening prayer

Acts 1:15-17, 20a, 20c-26

(Ps 103:1-2, 11-12, 19-20)

1 John 4:11-16

John 17:11b-19

Overview of the Gospel:

- This is a portion of the High Priestly Prayer of Jesus (John 17), so-called in part because the prayer is structured like—and shares themes with—the service celebrated by the High Priest on the Day of Atonement, the holiest day of the Israelite/Jewish liturgical calendar.
- The name is also appropriate for it is Christ's prayer consecrating His body and blood for the sacrifice in which they are about to be offered, and His benediction over the Church that He is to bring forth in His glorification.
- In the first part of this lengthy prayer, Jesus prays for himself (John 17:1-5) and in the last part He prays for all believers (John 17:20-26).
- What we hear today is from the middle part (starting at verse 6) where He prays for His disciples.
- This prayer takes place in the upper room during the Last Supper. Immediately after this prayer Jesus and the eleven (Judas having left to betray Him) go to Gethsemane for the Agony in the Garden.

Questions:

- In the first reading, why do you think the Apostles felt it necessary to replace Judas? What does this say about Jesus' plan for his Church and how he leads his followers to discern and fulfill that plan?
- What is your process for discerning and carrying out the will of God in your life?
- How does 1 John 4:10 (the verse just prior to our second reading) help put this reading in context? What is our motive for loving one another? What is the result?
- How well does your community or group put the message of this passage into effect? What about in your own life? How can we all do a better job of this, both as a Church and individually?
- In the Gospel reading, at what critical juncture are these words of Jesus spoken? What series of events will be put into action immediately after? How does it lend urgency to Jesus' words to the Apostles?
- Why does Jesus ask the Father to "consecrate" the disciples? In what ways are they to be consecrated? How are all Christians in a certain way consecrated?
- What is your own relation with the *world*, on the one hand, and the *truth*, on the other? To which of the two do you—in your heart of hearts—belong? How do you know that?

Catechism of the Catholic Church: §§ 642, 995, 221, 2604, 2746-2751, 2812, 2850

Closing prayer

"Our labor here is brief, but the reward is eternal. Do not be disturbed by the clamor of the world which passes like a shadow. Do not let the false delights of a deceptive world deceive you." -St. Clare of Assisi

Remember to read and meditate this week on the daily Mass readings!

"Consecrated in God's truth"

Gospel: *John 17:11-19*

Meditation: Do you know why God created you - what purpose and mission he has entrusted to you? Jesus' aim and mission was to glorify his heavenly Father. All he said and did gave glory to his Father. On the eve of his sacrifice on the cross and in the presence of his disciples, Jesus made his high priestly prayer: "Holy Father, keep them in your name that they may be one as we are one". Jesus prayed for the unity of his disciples and for all who would believe in him. Jesus' prayer for his people is that we be united with God the Father in his Son and through his Holy Spirit and be joined together, in unity with all who are members of Christ's body.

A mission of love to make us one

What motivated Jesus to lay down his life on the cross as the atoning sacrifice for the sin of the world? It was love - love for his Father in heaven and love for each and everyone of us who are made in the image and likeness of God. Jesus was sent into the world by his Father for a purpose and that purpose was a mission of love to free us from slavery to sin, Satan, fear, death, and hopelessness. Jesus saw glory in the cross rather than shame. Obedience to his Father's will was his glory.



Jesus kept his Father's word even when tempted to forgo the cross. Jesus did not rely on his own human resources and strength to accomplish his Father's will. He trusted in his Father to give him strength, courage, and perseverance in the face of opposition, trials, and temptation.

God created us for a purpose and a mission

We also must take up our cross and follow the Lord Jesus wherever he may call us. He will give us the strength and power of the Holy Spirit to live as his disciples. John Henry Newman (1801-1890) wrote: "God has created me to do him some definite service; he has committed some work to me which he has not committed to another. I have my mission - I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next. I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons. He has not created me for nothing. Therefore, I will trust him. Whatever, wherever I am. I cannot be thrown away." Do you trust in God and in his call and purpose for your life?

Consecrated in truth and holiness

Jesus prayed that his disciples would be sanctified and consecrated in God's truth and holiness. The scriptural word for *consecration* comes from the same Hebrew word which means *holy* or *set apart for God*. This word also means *to be equipped with the qualities of mind and heart and character for such a task or service*.

Just as Jesus was called by the Father to serve in holiness and truth, so we, too, are called and equipped for the task of serving God in the world as his ambassadors. God's truth frees us from ignorance and the deception of sin. It reveals to us God's goodness, love, and wisdom. And it gives us a thirst for God's holiness. The Holy Spirit is the source and giver of all holiness. As we allow the Holy Spirit to work in our lives, he transforms us by his purifying fire and changes us into the likeness of Christ. Is your life consecrated to God?

"Lord Jesus, take my life and make it wholly pleasing to you. Sanctify me in your truth and guide me by your Holy Spirit that I may follow you faithfully wherever you lead."

Meditation: © 2018 *Servants of the Word*,
source: www.dailyscripture.net,
author, Don Schwager