



# LIVING THE GOSPEL

**7th Sunday of Easter  
May 12 2024**

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**Theme: "Holy Father, keep them in thy name, which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are one."**

## **Gathering Prayer**

**All:** Graciously hear our supplications, O Lord, so that we, who believe that the Savior of the human race is with you in your glory, may experience, as he promised, until the end of the world, his abiding presence among us. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## **Exploring the Word**

### **Gospel Reading: John 17:11-19**

<sup>11</sup> And now I am no more in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to thee. Holy Father, keep them in thy name, which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. <sup>12</sup> While I was with them, I kept them in thy name, which thou hast given me; I have guarded them, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled. <sup>13</sup> But now I am coming to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. <sup>14</sup> I have given them thy word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. <sup>15</sup> I do not pray that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil one. <sup>16</sup> They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. <sup>17</sup> Sanctify them in the truth; thy word is truth. <sup>18</sup> As thou didst send me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.

<sup>19</sup> And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be consecrated in truth."

## **Gospel Focus**

In this gospel, Jesus prays for his disciples prior to his arrest and death. He is preparing to be separated from them, and though he knows this separation will be temporary, he also knows a more decisive one will come with the ascension. In his prayer, he speaks of "the world" as something the disciples do not belong to and something that hates them. Being his followers makes them different than they were before; they are no longer able to be fully at home in this life but are rather called to strive for heaven. At the same time, though, Jesus sends them into the world, consecrated and holy, so that they might make the world holy by being in it and bring it eventually to Jesus.

## **Gospel Reflection**

The reading from Acts is set in the Upper Room, where the disciples are gathered between the ascension and Pentecost. About 120 people are there (1:15), a symbol for the full number of disciples. In the preceding verse, Luke lists as present the Twelve along with the women, presumably Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna, and many others (Luke 8:1-3), who came up to Jerusalem and witnessed the crucifixion (Luke 23:49), saw Jesus laid up in the tomb (Luke 23: 55-56), and discovered it empty (Luke 24: 1-9) Jesus' mother and his family are also there.

All are present except for Judas. We can hear the pain and disillusionment of the early community as they struggled to explain how it could be that one who was "numbered among us and was allotted to share in this ministry" could have ended as the guide for those who arrested Jesus. As always, the Scriptures provide the assurance that God is not absent even during these most horrific moments, even if they do not fully explain such tragic happenings.

In the first chapter of Acts, Peter emerges as spokesperson for the community. It is a turbulent time of transition, and they rely on the form of leadership with which they are familiar. This is the last time that the Twelve are reconstituted; a replacement is not chosen for James (the son of Zebedee) when he is killed by Herod (Acts 12:2). As the narrative progresses, the patterns of leadership shift. The Twelve disappear from the story after 6:2, Peter is not mentioned again after 15:7. James and the elders emerge as the leaders of the community in Jerusalem (12:17; 15:13; 21:18) and Paul takes center stage in the mission to the Gentiles.

In the gospel, we have the middle section of Jesus' prayer during the last discourse. We are meant to overhear this intimate conversation between Jesus and the Father so that we can be encouraged by the legacy bequeathed to us. Jesus addresses God as "Father," the one who, in a patriarchal culture, is responsible for protecting the whole household, Jesus has embodied this protective care of his disciples. His strong arms enwrapped them, like a father who fends off all threats to his children's well-being, or a mother who enfolds her little ones, shielding them from all harm.

Just as Jesus has been consecrated for mission, so he prays for the consecration of his followers. *Consecrated* means to be anointed and set apart for mission, not in a manner of kings whose anointing separates them from the realities of ordinary people, but in truth, which immerses Jesus' disciples into the heart of the struggles of all their fellow creatures in "the world." While kings are anointed on the head to great acclaim, disciples of Jesus are "anointed" in foot washing, set apart for self-surrender in love to one another, particularly those who would seem most unlovable. This is the oil of truth that flows over the head of Jesus' disciples, consecrating them in the protective mantle of the "name" and the "word."

## **Old/New Testament and CCC links**

### **First Reading — Acts 1:15-17, 20-26**

<sup>15</sup> In those days Peter stood up among the brethren (the company of persons was in all about a hundred and twenty), and said, <sup>16</sup> "Brethren, the scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David, concerning Judas who was guide to those who arrested Jesus. <sup>17</sup> For he was numbered among us, and was allotted his share in this ministry. ...

<sup>20</sup> For it is written in the book of Psalms, 'Let his habitation become desolate, and let there be no one to live in it'; and 'His office let another take.' <sup>21</sup> So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, <sup>22</sup> beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection." <sup>23</sup> And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. <sup>24</sup> And

they prayed and said, "Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, show which one of these two thou hast chosen <sup>25</sup> to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside, to go to his own place." <sup>26</sup> And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias; and he was enrolled with the eleven apostles.

### **Responsorial Psalm — Ps 103:1-2, 11-12, 19-20**

**(R): *The Lord has set his throne in heaven.***

Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all my being, bless his holy name.  
Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. **(R)**

For as the heavens are high above the earth, so surpassing is his kindness toward those who fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has he put our transgressions from us. **(R)**

The Lord has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all.  
Bless the Lord, all you his angels, you mighty in strength, who do his bidding. **(R)**

### **Second Reading — 1 John 4:11-16**

<sup>11</sup> Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. <sup>12</sup> No man has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us. <sup>13</sup> By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his own Spirit. <sup>14</sup> And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. <sup>15</sup> Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. <sup>16</sup> So we know and believe the love God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

### **Catechism of The Catholic Church**

**2466.** In Jesus Christ, the whole of God's truth has been made manifest. "Full of grace and truth," he came as the "light of the world," *he is the Truth.* (Jn 1:14; 8:12; Cf. 14:6) "Whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness." (Jn 12:46) The disciple of Jesus continues in his word so as to know "the truth [that] will make you free" and that sanctifies. (Jn 8:32; Cf. 17:17) To follow Jesus is to live in "the Spirit of truth," whom the Father sends in his name and who leads "into all the truth." (Jn 16:13) To his disciples Jesus teaches the unconditional love of truth: "Let what you say be simply 'Yes or No.'" (Mt 5:37)

**2747.** Christian Tradition rightly calls this prayer the "priestly" prayer of Jesus. It is the prayer of our high priest, inseparable from his sacrifice, from his passing over (Passover) to the Father to whom he is wholly "consecrated." (Cf. Jn 17:11, 13, 19)

**2812.** Finally, in Jesus the name of the Holy God is revealed and given to us, in the flesh, as Savior, revealed by what he is, by his word, and by his sacrifice. (Cf. Mt 1:21; Lk 1:31, Jn 8:28; 17:8; 17:17-19) This is the heart of his priestly prayer: "Holy Father . . . for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be consecrated in truth." (Jn 17:11, 19) Because he "sanctifies" his own name, Jesus reveals to us the name of the Father. (Cf. Ezek 20:39; 36:20-21; Jn 17:6) At the end of Christ's Passover, the Father gives him the name that is above all names: "Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Phil 2:9-11)

**2849.** Such a battle and such a victory become possible only through prayer. It is by his prayer that Jesus vanquishes the tempter, both at the outset of his public mission and in the ultimate struggle of his agony.(Cf. Mt 4:1-11; 26:36-44) In this petition to our heavenly Father, Christ unites us to his battle and his agony. He urges us to *vigilance* of the heart in communion with his own. Vigilance is "custody of the heart," and Jesus prayed for us to the Father: "Keep them in your name."(Jn 17:11; Cf. Mk 13:9, 23, 33-37; 14:38; Lk 12:35-40) The Holy Spirit constantly seeks to awaken us to keep watch.(Cf. 1 Cor 16:13; Col 4:2; 1 Thess 5:6; 1 Pet 5:8) Finally, this petition takes on all its dramatic meaning in relation to the last temptation of our earthly battle; it asks for *final perseverance*. "Lo, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is he who is awake."(Rev 16:15)

**2850.** The last petition to our Father is also included in Jesus' prayer: "I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one."(Jn 17:15) It touches each of us personally, but it is always "we" who pray, in communion with the whole Church, for the deliverance of the whole human family. The Lord's Prayer continually opens us to the range of God's economy of salvation. Our interdependence in the drama of sin and death is turned into solidarity in the Body of Christ, the "communion of saints."(Cf. RP 16)

### **Sharing and Discussion**

1. What role does luck play in the living of one's faith? Are there any coincidences when it comes to faith?
2. Where do you see the most obvious examples of a disconnect between our world and the reign of God as Jesus described and prayed for? How do you move through the world while knowing it is not your final home?
3. How do you live in love in order that you might remain in God?

### **Closing Prayer**

**All:** God of every truth and goodness, you sent your son into the world so that he might send your people out to proclaim the gospel message across the generations. Hear our prayers that we might reflect your glory to the ends of the earth. We ask this through Christ our risen Lord. **Amen.**

**Leader:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life.

**All:** Amen