

Seventh Sunday of Easter 🕯 May 24, 2020

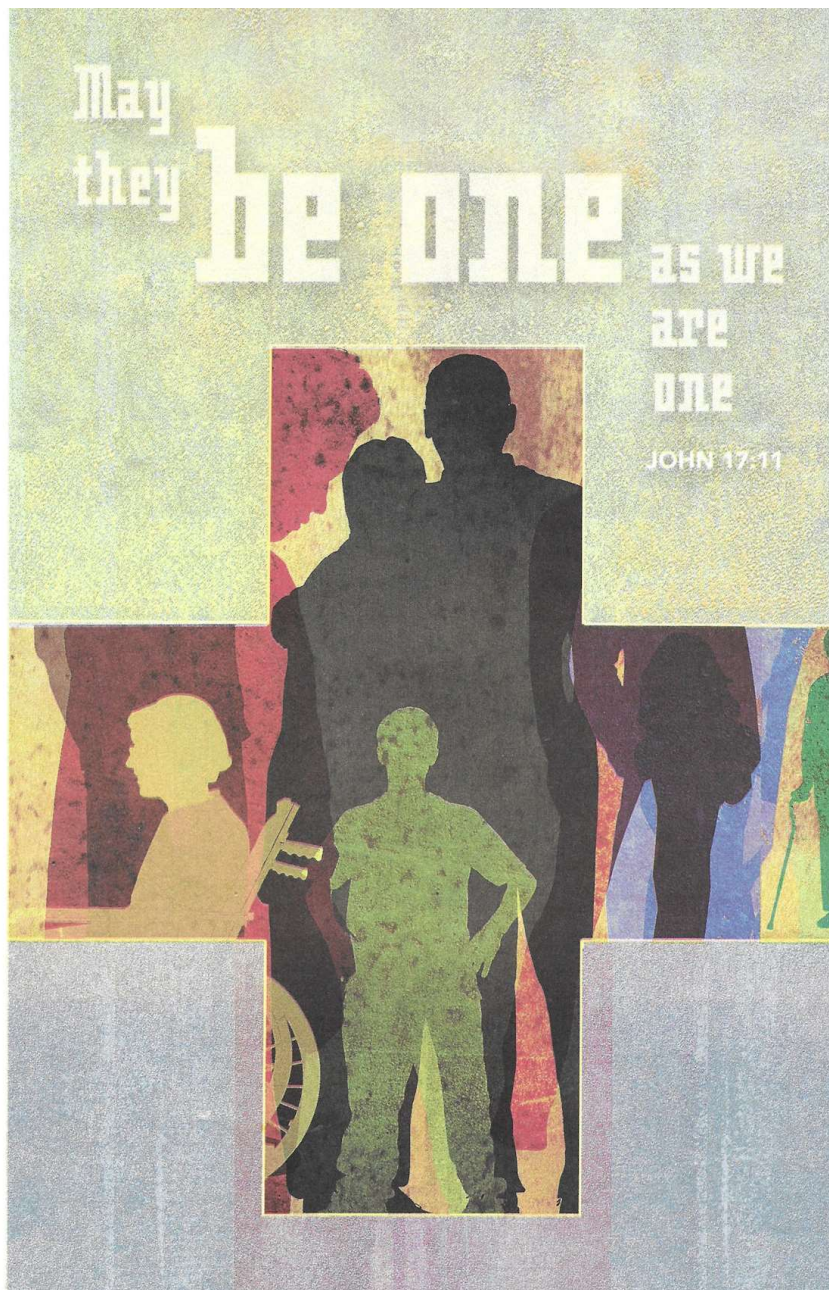
Jesus' Prayer

Decades beyond her early childhood, from time to time she repeats the bedtime prayer she has never forgotten: "Now I lay me down to sleep. I pray the Lord my soul to keep. Guard me, Jesus, through the night, and wake me with the morning light." What then follows is the threading of names, precious like pearls, on a string. "God bless . . .," she begins, then lists mom, dad, grandmas, grandpas, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, all by name. Then teachers she liked, friends nearby and hungry children afar, the sick neighbor, the old man in the library, the blind lady at the post office, the lifeguard at the beach. Sometimes there is an "Amen," but often sleep comes first.

Jesus washes the feet of his disciples, shares a farewell meal with them, and teaches for the last time about his way of love. He promises again the presence of the Spirit and the coming of God's peace. Then, at the end of the day, he prays that God will be with his followers—and he prays for each of us. Jesus prays for his disciples, that they might know the love of God just as much as they know the real person of Jesus.

Jesus' prayer is also a prayer for unity. Jesus prays that we may be one just as he and God are one. Jesus prays, "All mine are yours, and yours are mine" (John 17:10). Following Jesus' example, we also may pray for the unity of all people with God, and the reconciling of peoples and all creation. We pray that what the world rejects God will receive. We pray that what the world divides God will make one. We pray that what the world threatens God will protect.

May we be comforted by Jesus' prayer for us, and may we be so emboldened to pray ourselves for the blessing, presence, and unity found in our risen Lord and Savior.





Celebrate

Seventh Sunday of Easter

May 24, 2020

In these days between Ascension and Pentecost, we gather with the disciples in the upper room, waiting for the Spirit to transform the church around the world. In today's gospel Jesus prays for his followers and for their mission in his name. Amid religious, social, and economic divisions, we seek the unity that Jesus had with his Father. Made one in baptism, we go forth to live our faith in the world, eager for the unity that God intends for the whole human family.

Prayer of the Day

O God of glory, your Son Jesus Christ suffered for us and ascended to your right hand. Unite us with Christ and each other in suffering and in joy, that all the world may be drawn into your bountiful presence, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

First Reading

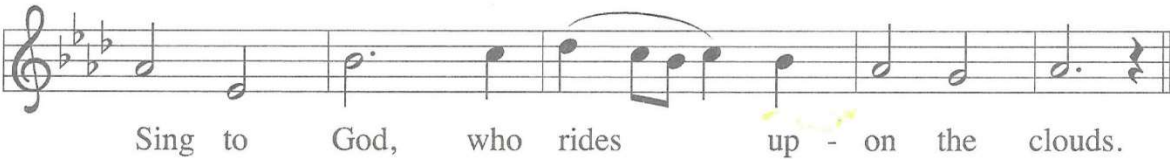
Acts 1:6-14

Today's reading is part of the introduction to the narrative of the outpouring of the Spirit on Pentecost. These verses tell of the risen Lord's conversation with his disciples on the eve of his ascension, in which he promises that they will receive the power of the Holy Spirit.

When [the apostles] had come together, they asked [Jesus], "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." ⁹When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. ¹¹They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking

up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

¹²Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey away. ¹³When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. ¹⁴All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.



- Let God arise, and let God's ene-¹ mies be scattered;
 let those who ¹ hate God flee.
- ²As smoke is driven away, so you should drive ¹ them away;
 as the wax melts before the fire,
 so let the wicked perish at the pres-¹ ence of God.
- ³But let the righteous be glad and rejoice ¹ before God;
 let them also be mer-¹ ry and joyful.
- ⁴Sing to God, sing praises to God's name;
 exalt the one who ¹ rides the clouds;
 I AM is that name, rejoice ¹ before God! **R**
- ⁵In your holy habita-¹ tion, O God,
 you are a father to orphans, defend-¹ er of widows;
- ⁶you give the solitary a home and bring forth prisoners ¹ into freedom;
 but the rebels shall live in ¹ desert places.
- ⁷O God, when you went forth be-¹ fore your people,
 when you marched ¹ through the wilderness,
- ⁸the earth quaked, and the skies poured down rain,
 at the presence of God, the ¹ God of Sinai,
 at the presence of God, the ¹ God of Israel.
- ⁹You sent a bountiful ¹ rain, O God;
 you restored your inheritance ¹ when it languished.
- ¹⁰Your people found their ¹ home in it;
 in your goodness, O God,
 you have made provision ¹ for the poor. **R**
- ³²Sing to God, O kingdoms ¹ of the earth;
 sing praises ¹ to the Lord.
- ³³You ride in the heavens, O God, in the ¹ ancient heavens;
 you send forth your voice, your ¹ mighty voice.
- ³⁴Ascribe pow-¹ er to God,
 whose majesty is over Israel; whose strength is ¹ in the skies.
- ³⁵How wonderful you are in your holy places, O ¹ God of Israel,
 giving strength and power to your people! ¹ Blessed be God! **R**

Second Reading

1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11

Our faith in Christ does not make us immune from the scorn of others. Nevertheless, we are to resist the designs of evil when we experience disparagement from others because we trust God's grace will strengthen and guide us.

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³But rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you.

^{5:6} Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. ⁷Cast all

your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. ⁸Discipline yourselves, keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour. ⁹Resist him, steadfast in your faith, for you know that your brothers and sisters in all the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering. ¹⁰And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you. ¹¹To him be the power forever and ever. Amen.

Gospel

John 17:1-11

On the night before his crucifixion, Jesus prays to his heavenly Father, asking that those who continue his work in this world will live in unity.

After Jesus had spoken these words [to his disciples], he looked up to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, ²since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. ³And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. ⁴I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. ⁵So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.

⁶"I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave

them to me, and they have kept your word. ⁷Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; ⁸for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. ⁹I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. ¹⁰All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. ¹¹And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one."

Prayers of Intercession

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

Uplifted by the promised hope of healing and resurrection, we join the people of God in all times and places in praying for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

O God, call your people to be one, as you are one. Unite your church in the truth of your gospel, the love of our neighbor, and the call to proclaim your reign to all people. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Breathe life into your creation. Guide your people as we explore the mysteries of the universe. We pray for the work of scientists and mathematicians whose skill enriches our understanding (*like Nicholas Copernicus and Leonard Euler, whom the church commemorates today*). Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Make your justice known among the nations of the earth. Protect the vulnerable (*especially in nations currently in crisis*). Redirect those who use violence and greed as weapons. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Come to the aid of your children. We pray for those engulfed in grief, those without supportive families, and for all who are isolated, powerless, or afraid, that all may rest their anxieties in your care. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Give courage to all who embark on new ventures. We especially remember this day those who risked their lives to serve in our armed forces. Grant safety to those serving at home or abroad, and assure them of your never-failing strength. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Raise all your saints to eternal life. Until that day, we give you thanks for the faithful examples of those who have listened to your voice and now rest in you. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

With bold confidence in your love, almighty God, we place all for whom we pray into your eternal care; through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Preparing for Next Week

Monday Psalm 99. **Tuesday** 1 Peter 4:7-11. **Wednesday** (commemoration of John Calvin, renewer of the church, died 1564) 1 Kings 8:54-65. **Thursday** Psalm 33:12-22. **Friday** (commemoration of Jiří Trnovský, hymnwriter, died 1637) Romans 8:14-17. **Saturday** (Vigil of Pentecost) Romans 8:14-17, 22-27. **Day of Pentecost** Acts 2:1-21 *or* Numbers 11:24-30; Psalm 104:24-34, 35b; 1 Corinthians 12:3b-13 *or* Acts 2:1-21; John 20:19-23 *or* John 7:37-39.

CELEBRATE May 24, 2020

Volume 51, Number 3

CELEBRATE (ISSN 1083-3242, USPS 763-460) is published quarterly by Augsburg Fortress, 510 Marquette Ave, Suite 800, Minneapolis, MN, 55402. Periodicals postage paid in Twin Cities, MN and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to Celebrate, Augsburg Fortress Publishers, P.O. Box 1553, Minneapolis, MN 55440-8730. Printed in U.S.A. Price per weekly part \$4.90 per 100 copies; price in Canada subject to exchange rates. Minimum order 50 copies of each issue; all orders must be in multiples of 50. Copyright © 2020 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. May not be reproduced. Revised Common Lectionary © 1992 Consultation on Common Texts. Readings from New Revised Standard Version Bible with Apocrypha © 1989 Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Prayer of the day, psalm, and readings during the week from *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* © 2006, admin. Augsburg Fortress. Refrain music by Sally Messner. Refrain accompaniment is in *Psalter for Worship, Year A* (Augsburg Fortress, 2007). Please visit our Web site at augsburgfortress.org. Lectionary year A.
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