



LIVING THE GOSPEL

**The Seventh Sunday of Easter.
June 1st 2025**

Theme: "I pray..that they may be one, 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 17:20-26

²⁰ "I pray not only for these, but for those also who through their words will believe in me. ²¹ May they all be one. Father, may they be one in us, as you are in me and I am in you, so that the world may believe it was you who sent me. ²² I have given them the glory you gave to me, that they may be one as we are one. ²³ With me in them and you in me, may they be so completely one that the world will realize that it was you who sent me and that I have loved them as much as you loved me.

²⁴ Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, so that they may always see the glory you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. ²⁵ Father, Righteous One, the world has not known you, but I have known you, and these have known that you have sent me. ²⁶ I have made your name known to them and will continue to make it known, so that the love with which you loved me may be in them, and so that I may be in them.'

Gospel Focus

The radical unity to which Jesus calls us is not always appealing. We may not want to be with others in the church. Some of them radically disagree with us. Some of them have done truly terrible things. Some of these terrible things have even been done in the name of God. We might not find ourselves able to forgive-which is okay, because we are not God. The unity to which God calls us is a call, yes, but it is ultimately God's work. It is God's love that is the source of all human love. Only God can make real the union that God wants for us.

Gospel Reflection

In today's gospel, we have the third and last part of Jesus' prayer just before he completes the final part of his journey back to the One who sent him. He speaks of his profound oneness with the Father that he desires to share completely with those who believe in him.

The unity of Jesus with the Father is not that of an exclusive twosome. Jesus' fervent prayer is that all may be drawn into this uniting love of the divine persons. He prays not only for those who have come to believe in him but also for all who will believe through their word, as he earnestly desires "that they may be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us" (17:21).

As we are becoming more aware in our day of the oneness of the whole cosmos, we may hear Jesus' prayer not only for oneness of the human community but also for the every part of the created universe. We know that every part of the cosmos is interrelated and connected in one great web of life and that we are physically connected by atoms that have recycled into us from the other living beings.

Since this is our reality, perhaps Jesus' prayer is not so much of a prayer that unity may come to be, but rather that we who are already completely and irrevocably united may come to this realization and act accordingly. This reality would have a profound effect not only on how human beings treat one another but also on the ways in which human beings care for Earth and all creatures.

This oneness that already binds us together is a gift from God, and like all gifts, it can be accepted or rejected. One way in which we can receive the gift is to enter into contemplative prayer, seeking and longing for oneness with our Beloved.

The author of Revelation, in the second reading, provides us a mantra by which we may pray for oneness. The word *come* is like a drumbeat, inviting us to pray repeatedly to let our Beloved come and transform us with unifying love. There is nothing to inhibit this uniting love from fully flourishing in us, if we continually pray for it.

Old/New Testament and CCC links

First Reading — Acts 7: 55-60

⁵⁵ Stephen, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked up intently to heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and Stephen said, ⁵⁶ "Behold, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." ⁵⁷ But they cried out in a loud voice, covered their ears, and rushed upon him together. ⁵⁸ They threw him out of the city, and began to stone him. The witnesses laid down their cloaks at the feet of a young man named Saul. ⁵⁹ As they were stoning Stephen, he called out, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." ⁶⁰ Then he fell to his knees and cried out in a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them"; and when he said this, he fell asleep.

Responsorial Reading — Ps 97:1-2, 6-7, 9

R: The Lord is king, the most high over all the earth. (R)

The Lord is king; let the earth rejoice; let the many islands be glad.
Justice and judgment are the foundation of his throne. **(R)**

The heavens proclaim his justice, and all peoples see his glory.
All gods are prostrate before him. **(R)**

You, O Lord, are the Most High over all the earth,
exalted far above all gods. **(R)**

Second Reading — Rev 22:12-14, 16-17, 20

I, John, heard a voice saying to me: ¹² "Behold, I am coming soon.

I bring with me the recompense I will give to each according to his deeds. ¹³ I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." ¹⁴ Blessed are they who wash their robes so as to have the right to the tree of life and enter the city through its gates. ¹⁶ "I, Jesus, sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the root and offspring of David, the bright morning star." ¹⁷ The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." Let the hearer say, "Come." Let the one who thirsts come forward, and the one who wants it receive the gift of life-giving water. ²⁰ The one who gives this testimony says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!

Sharing and Discussion

1. In the Acts of the Apostles, Stephen prays for his executioners shortly before dying. Jesus has instructed us to pray for our enemies (see Matt 5:44). Why do you think you should pray for your enemies?
2. In today's gospel Jesus prays for those who will become followers through the word of his disciples. In your life of faith, whose "word" helped lead you to belief, and began your search for God in earnest?
3. Jesus prays for unity among his followers. Why is unity within a family and community, important? How have you contributed towards the unity of your "communities"?

Closing Prayer

All: Heavenly Father, we ask you to hear our prayer in your goodness, and through our oneness with you we look forward to your providence. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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

All: Amen.