

John 17: 11-19

Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and said: 'Holy Father, keep those you have given me true to your name, so that they may be one like us. While I was with them, I kept those you had given me true to your name. I have watched over them and not one is lost except the one who chose to be lost, and this was to fulfil the scriptures. But now I am coming to you and while still in the world I say these things to share my joy with them to the full. I passed your word on to them, and the world hated them, because they belong to the world no more than I belong to the world. I am not asking you to remove them from the world, but to protect them from the evil one. They do not belong to the world any more than I belong to the world. Consecrate them in the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world, and for their sake I consecrate myself so that they too may be consecrated in truth.

Jesus prays, "Holy Father, keep them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one just as we are one." One for all and all for one, just like the 'Three Musketeers'. What would the world be like if we lived as one, just as the Father and Son live in that complete oneness? The unity that exists in the relationship between the Father and Son is a unity to which we are all called and for which we were all created. When we cease to live in that unity, we are living in a manner that is contrary to how we are called to be in this world. Just as we see between Israel & Palestine right now, where there is war, division, discord, hate, and violence, we are living in a manner that goes against the oneness and unity for which we are created to live. When we take steps toward creating peace, unity, and harmony, we are on the path to fulfilling the vocation to which we are called.

Show us, Lord, the areas in ourselves which cause division in our own lives and in the lives of others, and through the power of the Holy Spirit, grant us the will and courage to change. Amen.

Seventh Sunday of Easter

Year B

16th May 2021



This coming week is a time of preparation, a wonderful opportunity in which we, like Mary, the Apostles and the other disciples can spend time 'on retreat' praying for a renewed outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Church and on all of us, so that we can draw ever closer to God, be more attentive to his promptings and to respond to Him with joy and enthusiasm. Let us pray, in expectation, that our celebration of Pentecost will lead to the Church being renewed and strengthened by God's Spirit.

Opening Prayer

Graciously hear our supplications, O Lord, so that we, who believe that the Saviour 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.

Acts 1:15-17,20-26

One day Peter stood up to speak to the brothers – there were about a hundred and twenty persons in the congregation: ‘Brothers, the passage of scripture had to be fulfilled in which the Holy Spirit, speaking through David, foretells the fate of Judas, who offered himself as a guide to the men who arrested Jesus – after having been one of our number and actually sharing this ministry of ours. Now in the Book of Psalms it says: Let someone else take his office.

‘We must therefore choose someone who has been with us the whole time that the Lord Jesus was travelling round with us, someone who was with us right from the time when John was baptising until the day when he was taken up from us – and he can act with us as a witness to his resurrection.’

Having nominated two candidates, Joseph known as Barsabbas, whose surname was Justus, and Matthias, they prayed, ‘Lord, you can read everyone’s heart; show us therefore which of these two you have chosen to take over this ministry and apostolate, which Judas abandoned to go to his proper place.’ They then drew lots for them, and as the lot fell to Matthias, he was listed as one of the twelve apostles.

The remaining Apostles are looking for a replacement for Judas Iscariot. The method of deciding the election of ministers by lots, is one of those extraordinary methods which was inspired by God; but can seldom or ever be imitated. Where both candidates appeared equally worthy, as in the case between Barsabbas and Matthias, and human judgment cannot determine who is to be preferred, it cannot be said that it was wrong to decide it by lots. Thus, were avoided any of the evil consequences which might have occurred by one party being preferred before the other. St. Augustine observes, that in a doubtful case, where neither part is bad, to decide by lots is not in itself wrong.

Psalm 102(103):1-2,11-12,19-20

My soul, give thanks to the Lord all my being, bless his holy name.

My soul, give thanks to the Lord and never forget all his blessings.

For as the heavens are high above the earth so strong is his love for those who fear him. As far as the east is from the west so far does he remove our sins.

The Lord has set his sway in heaven and his kingdom is ruling over all.

Give thanks to the Lord, all his angels, mighty in power, fulfilling his word.

1 John 4:11-16

My dear people, since God has loved us so much, we too should love one another. No one has ever seen God; but as long as we love one another God will live in us and his love will be complete in us. We can know that we are living in him and he is living in us because he lets us share his Spirit. We ourselves saw and we testify that the Father sent his Son as saviour of the world. If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him, and he in God. We ourselves have known and put our faith in God’s love towards ourselves. God is love and anyone who lives in love lives in God, and God lives in him.

How can we as individuals, families and parishioners work toward accomplishing steps toward peace in our own lives? How can we live in the oneness that Jesus prayed for in the gospel so that we live as the Father and Son are one? How can we live in that Oneness that is God? The answer comes from this second reading from the First Letter of John. The answer can seem so simple and obvious that we can sometimes forget or ignore the advice, or rather, commandment, we receive from the scriptures. “God is love, and whoever remains in love remains in God.” We must then love one another so as to be one and to remain in God. We are called to that oneness now, and in our everyday lives. It can be too easy to fall into the trap of accepting our situations of broken relationships and divisions and not taking the first step toward love. Let our readings today and the Eucharist we celebrate inspire us to take the first step toward healing the brokenness that exists in our lives, our families and our world. Each step of love is a step toward living in the oneness to which we are called. Each one of us is called to work toward that oneness for the good of all. And when someone makes that step, even when that step takes place on the other side of our planet, we all benefit from that step towards unity and oneness.

Alleluia, alleluia! *I will not leave you orphans, says the Lord; I will come back to you, and your hearts will be full of joy!* **Alleluia!**

(Gospel overleaf)