

First reading Acts 1:12-14

'All with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer.'

After Jesus was taken up into heaven the Apostles returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers and sisters.

Responsorial Psalm 27(26):1, 4,7-8 R13

I believe I shall see the Lord's goodness in the land of the living.

The Lord is my light and my salvation;
whom shall I fear?

The Lord is the stronghold of my life;
whom should I dread?

There is one thing I ask of the Lord,
only this do I seek:

to live in the house of the Lord
all the days of my life,

to gaze on the beauty of the Lord,
to enquire at his temple.

O Lord, hear my voice when I call;
have mercy and answer me.

Of you my heart has spoken,
'Seek his face.'

Second reading 1 Peter 4:13-16

'If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed.'

Beloved: Rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or an evildoer, or as a meddler. Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name.

Gospel Acclamation Cf. John 14:18

Alleluia, alleluia.

I will not leave you as orphans, says the Lord.

I am going away and I will come to you, and your hearts will rejoice.

Alleluia.

Gospel John 17:1-11

'Father, glorify your Son.'

At that time: Jesus lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, 'Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over

all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

'I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you.'

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Feast days this week

Monday 18th May: St John I

Tuesday 19th May: St Dunstan of Canterbury

Wednesday 20th May: St Bernardine of Siena

Thursday 21st May: St Christopher Magallanes and his Companions

Friday 22nd May: St Rita of Cascia

Cycle of Prayer**Right Use of the Media**

Especially on World Communications day — 7th Sunday of Easter

Background

'Go out to the whole world; proclaim the Good News to all creation' is the message of the Gospel on the Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord. The Solemnity offers the starting point for understanding the right use of the media. The day is established by the Pontifical Council for Social Communications and each year there is message from the Holy Father.

There may be a collection on this day.

Prayer

*Father of light,
from whom every good gift comes,
send your Spirit into our lives
with the power of a mighty wind,
and by the flame of your wisdom
open the horizons of our minds.*

*Loosen our tongues
to sing your praise
in words beyond the power
of speech,*

*for without your Spirit
men and women could never raise
their voice in words of peace
or announce the truth
that is Jesus the Lord.*

There are many ways we can read today's Gospel. We can focus on the years of reflection that shaped it, rejoicing in the relationship between Father and Son expressed so clearly. We can also read it simply as it is written – as a prayer of Jesus for his followers, for us! Looking at it in this way, as a prayer, is probably the best way for us to enter into it in a liturgical context.

And what a beautiful prayer Jesus gives us.

It is good to read this Gospel knowing that everything Jesus said and did while on earth revealed to us the Father. Jesus came to show us the Father, and to leave us “an example that we should follow in his footsteps.” (1 Peter 2:21) So, what does Jesus tell us in this prayer about the God he is revealing?

It is impossible not to notice the amazing closeness Jesus has with the Father. It leaps out at us, expressed in almost every line. More than that, Jesus expresses this closeness in an informal, confident way without ever losing the reverence with which he holds the Father. He is confident, almost demanding, in the way he addresses his father. “Father, the hour has come: glorify your son....”, “...Now Father, it is time for you to glorify me....” Yet nowhere does he speak in a flippant or dismissive way. He acknowledges in everything he says that “...all you have given me comes indeed from you.” There is no hint of pride or arrogance in what he says or the way he says it.

Confident and informal, yet reverent and without pride or arrogance. All of us, I believe, can learn from this.

Jesus ‘knows’ the Father, and he knows the relationship the Father wishes to have with his people. Here, Jesus is speaking, not to a God on a throne, cold and distant from the world, but to a Father, with whom he has a relationship and who, he knows, loves and cares for him. But nothing is taken for granted in his relationship with his Father. He has been ‘sent’ by the Father and he owes everything he has to the father.

His relationship with his Father is a balanced one: Friendly and familiar, yet respectful and humble. Exactly how any son or daughter would want to relate to their own Father (or Mother). What Jesus shows us is no different.

There is one other thing in this Gospel that I think is well worth reflecting on:

In the Gospel we are told that “...before ever the world was...” Jesus was with the Father. The absolute trust Jesus shows in the Father, his confidence in talking to the Father is based on a relationship he knows and experiences. But... note this too: Jesus expresses the same trust and confidence in us! This may come as a surprise but it is there, clearly stated in the Gospel. Here is what he says, “...I have given them the teaching you gave to me, and they have truly accepted this, that I came from you...”. Jesus is confidently telling the Father that “they” (his followers) “have truly accepted this, that I came from you...”. He goes further and says, “...in them am I glorified.”

What trust God has in us. We may struggle to trust one another or even ourselves at times, but believe it or not, we are trusted – absolutely – by God, to carry on the work begun by Jesus. We talk so much about our faith in God, but how often do we think about God's faith in us? It is both overwhelming and humbling to realise that Jesus feels that, “...in them (in us) am I glorified.” Imagine, people who denied him, abandoned him, doubted him, misunderstood him, fell asleep when he needed their support most....and he can still say that “...in them am I glorified.”

The relationship Jesus has with his Father is the reason why he can speak with such trust and confidence to his Father. The trust he has in us, and the confidence with which he says, “...in them am I glorified.” must also come from his relationship with those he called his friends on this earth. Despite everything, Jesus saw something immeasurably valuable in those who were so obviously weak. He saw more in Peter, Thomas and the others than they saw in themselves. And the wonder is that he still does!

Today, as you listen to the Gospel, let Jesus, God, speak to you...just you. In the Gospel let him whisper, “you have been chosen by my Father to be mine in this world, and I trust you to be my witness. I believe...that in you I am glorified.”

If we feel daunted by this, do not fear, next week the Holy Spirit comes to us in the great Feast of Pentecost.