



Sunday 1st June 2025

The Seventh Sunday of Easter / Sunday after Ascension Day

Gospel Reading

John 17.20-26

²⁰ 'I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, ²¹ that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, ²³ I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. ²⁴ Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

²⁵ 'Righteous Father, the world does not know you, but I know you; and these know that you have sent me. ²⁶ I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.'

Other Readings: Acts 16.16-34

Psalm 97

Revelation 22.12-14, 16,17,20,21

Homily

On the night of the Last Supper, in an upper room in Jerusalem, Jesus prays.

He has just finished washing his disciples' feet, a radical act of humility. He has given them a new commandment: "Love one another as I have loved you." He has broken bread, poured wine, and said, "This is my body. This is my blood." And now, in the quiet intimacy of that room, Jesus turns his eyes toward heaven, and prays, not just for his disciples, but for us.

"I ask not only on behalf of these," Jesus says, "but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word." That is you and me. That is us.

And what does Jesus pray for? That we may be one.

Of all the things Jesus could have prayed for in that moment, it was not courage, protection, or wisdom, no, Jesus prays for oneness, not sameness, not uniformity, but oneness. The kind of unity that exists between the Father and the Son, intimate, interwoven, inseparable.

If Jesus is praying for our oneness, our togetherness, then surely, he is also acknowledging, and rejecting, our divisions. In a sense He is saying that "This is not the way it is meant to be." We probably already know that, yet we see the brokenness around us and within us, the world is split in every direction:

- Male or female
- Rich or poor
- Liberal or conservative
- Religious or atheist
- Educated or uneducated
- Young or old
- Saved or sinner
- Orthodox or heretic
- Sexual orientation and ethnicity

And more

Somehow these are not just characteristics or categories. They have become oppositions. Lines drawn in the sand. Walls built brick by brick. Not just outside of us, but inside of us. The divisions in the world reflect the divisions of the human heart. We are fragmented. And so we fragment the world around us.

But here's the good news: Jesus knows this, and still he prays. He sees the walls and still he calls us to love. He names our divisions and still he calls us to be one. A Unity rooted in God's love, but how? How can we possibly become one when we seem so different, when we disagree, when we wound each other, when history and politics and culture and more divide us?

We do not become one by trying harder to agree. We do not become one by pretending differences do not exist. We become one as we are drawn deeper into God. Jesus says: "May they be one, as you, Father, are in me and I am in you... so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them."

Our oneness is not something we achieve, it is something we receive. It is the fruit of being caught up in God's own love. The more we live in that love, God's fierce, gracious, boundary-breaking love, the more the walls begin to fall. The more we see one another not as enemies or strangers, but as sisters and brothers.

This does not mean we will agree on everything and nor are we meant to. It also does not mean that conflict will disappear. But it does mean that we are called to a different way of being in the world: A way of love. A way of communion. A way of unity.

Jesus' prayer does not end; locked in the upper room it continues with us, it continues in us. We are now the ones who must live this prayer out. We are now the ones who must become answers to Jesus' prayer. That means seeking unity, not division. Healing, not blame. Understanding, not judgment. It means listening across the lines. Standing with the outcast. Breaking bread with the stranger. Being peacemakers in a world that profits from war.

Jesus has already shown us the way. He knelt and washed feet, He broke his body and poured out his blood. He crossed every boundary, between heaven and earth, divine and human, life and death, all so that we might be one. So, this week, may we live into his prayer. May we reject the easy temptation of division. May we see in every person, not a category, not a threat, but a beloved child of God. And may we open our hearts anew to the unity Christ has already given us.

"That they may all be one... so that the world may believe." Amen.

Conversation Questions

1. Where in your life, relationships, community, or within yourself, do you feel division, and how might Jesus' prayer for unity invite healing in that space?
2. What boundaries or oppositions do you find yourself holding onto, and how might God's love be calling you to see others through the lens of oneness rather than difference?
3. Is there anything else from the passage not already discussed that speaks to you? What is it?
4. What will you do this week in your Monday-to-Saturday ministry in response to what you have heard today? #everydayfaith

Prayer

Spend some time in prayer, responding to what you have heard today and listening to what God might be saying to you.

Collect of the day

*O God the King of glory,
you have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ
with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven:
we beseech you, leave us not comfortless,
but send your Holy Spirit to strengthen us
and exalt us to the place where our Saviour Christ is gone before,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.*

(or)

*Risen, ascended Lord,
as we rejoice at your triumph,
fill your Church on earth with power and compassion,
that all who are estranged by sin
may find forgiveness and know your peace,
to the glory of God the Father.*

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