

Sunday, May 20, 2012

Seventh Sunday of Easter

INTRODUCTION

The gospel for Easter's seventh Sunday is always taken from the long prayer Jesus prays for his followers in John's gospel on the night before his death, and always includes Jesus' desire that his followers will be one as he and the Father are one. This oneness is not mere doctrinal agreement or institutional unity, but mutual abiding, interpenetrating life, mutual love and joy. This oneness is the work of the Spirit whom we have received but also await. Come, Holy Spirit!

FIRST READING: Acts 1:15–17, 21–26

In the days between Jesus' ascension and Pentecost, Peter oversees the process whereby one of the members of the community of believers is chosen to be the twelfth apostle, in order to fill the vacancy created by Judas' treachery and death.

¹⁵In those days Peter stood up among the believers (together the crowd numbered about one hundred twenty persons) and said, ¹⁶Friends, the scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit through David foretold concerning Judas, who became a guide for those who arrested Jesus — ¹⁷for he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry." ²¹So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, ²²beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us — one of these must become a witness with us to his resurrection." ²³So they proposed two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also known as Justus, and Matthias. ²⁴Then they prayed and said, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which one of these two you have chosen ²⁵to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place." ²⁶And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles.

PSALM: Psalm 1

The LORD knows the way of the righteous. (Ps. 1:6)

¹Happy are they who have not walked in the counsel of the wicked, nor lingered in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seats of the scornful!

²Their delight is in the law of the LORD, and they meditate on God's teaching day and night.

³They are like trees planted by streams of water, bearing fruit in due season, with leaves that ¹do not wither; everything they ¹do shall prosper.

⁴It is not so ¹with the wicked; they are like chaff which the wind ¹blows away.

⁵Therefore the wicked shall not stand upright when ¹judgment comes, nor the sinner in the council ¹of the righteous.

⁶For the LORD knows the way ¹of the righteous, but the way of the wicked shall ¹be destroyed.

SECOND READING: 1 John 5:9–13

God has borne witness to the gift of eternal life in Jesus Christ. Whoever believes in the Son of God believes in the witness of God and has the promise of eternal life.

⁹If we receive human testimony, the testimony of God is greater; for this is the testimony of God that he has testified to his Son. ¹⁰Those who believe in the Son of God have the testimony in their hearts. Those who do not believe in God have made him a liar by not believing in the testimony that God has given concerning his Son. ¹¹And this is the testimony: God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹²Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. ¹³I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION (new member's reception)

Let us pray for those who are affirming their Baptism, and for all the baptized everywhere. That they may be redeemed from all evil and rescued from the way of sin and death. Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

That the Holy Spirit may open their hearts to your grace and truth. Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

That they may be kept in the faith and communion of your holy Church. Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

That they may be sent into the world in witness to your love. Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

That they may be brought to the fullness of your peace and glory. Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

GOSPEL: John 17:6–19

In this reading the church hears Jesus' words on the night before his death. This gospel reports the words of Jesus' prayer, a prayer for his disciples and for all who would believe in him through their words.

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. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for 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. I 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. All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. And 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. While I was with them, I protected them in your name that you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost, so that the scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves. I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one. They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.