

John 17:1-11^{iv v}

After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed. 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."

^{iv} About the Gospel: John 17:1-11

Chapter 17 is known as the prayer of consecration or high-priestly prayer of Jesus. He offers himself to the Father and speaks as high priest in offering intercession for others.

Jesus' ministry on earth is completed. He has manifested God's nature and character (literally, "God's name") to the disciples, and they have received the knowledge that his works are those of the Father. This prayer is the expression of Jesus' union and communion

with the Father, spoken aloud before the disciples so that they may share that union. It is thus revelation as well as intercession. Jesus prays for himself, for the disciples and for future believers.

The “hour” of the final revelation of God’s presence in the suffering and crucifixion has come. In the completion of the work of redemption, the Father and the Son reveal one another in mutual glory. Eternal life, the consequence of that redemption, is “to know...the only true God, and Jesus Christ” (v. 3). This knowledge is not an intellectual comprehension but an immediate experience of an intimacy with God, now fulfilled in personal relationship with Jesus.

▼ Reflection and Response

If we take today’s gospel to heart, we might find the best subject for meditation by looking around us at the people assembled in church.

Christ tells us that he has entrusted his message to them. For them he prays, because they take his place in the world. They belong to God.

A large chunk of the reading from Acts is the listing of names, as though all we need to know is contained there. To the original audience, the mention of Peter, Andrew, Matthew, Mary and the others would probably call up the story of each person: the unique spins of grace and twists of plot in each life. Today we would name the women individually rather than lump them together as an anonymous group, and their faith would sing in complementarity with the men’s.

Our list might include Carlos...

“If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed...” (1 Peter 4:14). Carlos was demoted from his job as a company president because he valued his workers more than his profits. He refused to drive them into overproductivity and overtime that would jeopardize their health and their families. Now his family makes do with less...

And Lucia...

“All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer...” (Acts 1:14). Sunday school teacher Lucia contends with 19 children of different ages and stages. The boys poke each other; the girls look primly bored. No matter. She has prepared dough and they bake pretzels

in a shape symbolizing arms folded for prayer. As they roll their “snakes” and brush them with egg white, she converses simply with the children about prayer. “What makes you scared?” Spiders, it seems—and mean brothers. “Do you ever pray when you’re scared?” The conversation meanders over the yeasty smell of rising dough: never didactic, gently inviting. More important than any doctrine is this shaping of one prayerful individual, one attitude at a time.

We, too, are part of that group. Though we fumble and falter, we are present with each other. We belong to Christ, and we, too, take his place in the world. The first Christians live on: Mary and Matthew, Bartholomew and Simon, Carlos and Lucia, you and me...

Quietly consider:

In what ways, today, will I link arms with Mary and Matthew, Bartholomew and Simon...