

Read

Acts of the Apostles
1:12-14

Psalms 27:1, 4, 7-8

1 Peter 4:13-16

John 17:1-11a

LIVING THE WORD

Seventh Sunday of Easter

May 24, 2020



REFLECTION

We encounter Jesus at prayer three times in John's account of the Gospel. First, Jesus prays at the tomb of Lazarus before he calls forth his friend from the dead. Second, Jesus prays in the upper room at the Last Supper, blessing God and giving thanks and praise. In today's Gospel, Jesus prays for the community of believers before he returns to heaven.

These accounts of Jesus at prayer are especially significant in John's account of the Gospel. From the opening verses of his account, we know that Jesus and the Father are one. The two are not separate entities. Rather, Jesus and the Father are intimately connected. At first glance it might seem strange that Jesus would pray to the Father when they are so closely connected, but that is exactly the point. One of the reasons Jesus and the Father are so close is because of Jesus' deep prayer life. The same is true for each of us. We grow in relationship with God through our prayer.

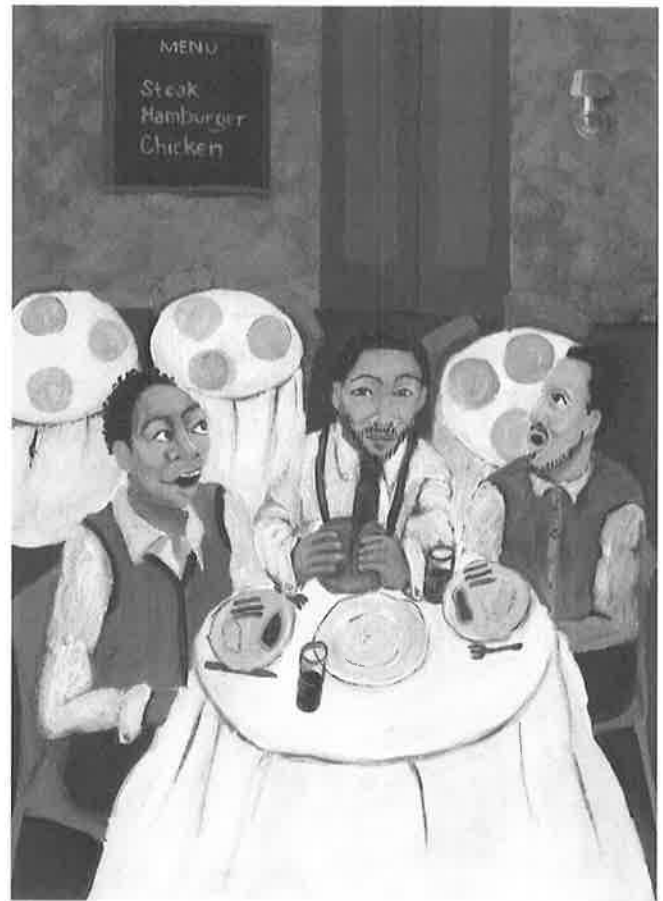
QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ What are some of your favorite prayer pathways, or ways to pray?
- ❖ What are your goals for your prayer life and relationship with God?



ACTION

Think about one of your closest friends. Take a few moments and draw a timeline that marks some of the major events in your friendship. This might include the first time you met, birthday celebrations, trips together, and other significant events. Then, chart a similar timeline that describes your relationship with God. What are some of the major events in your faith journey?





May 24, 2020

SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

LECTIONARY #59A

Acts of the Apostles 1:12-14

Psalm 27:1, 4, 7-8

1 Peter 4:13-16

John 17:1-11a

Prepare for the Word

The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.

Leader's Context

Today's Gospel begins the final part of Jesus' "Farewell discourse." This reading is the first half of Jesus' prayer for his disciples and for the world. It also happens to be the longest prayer Jesus ever says in any of the Gospels.

Q FOCUS: *Journeying in relationship with God.*

Liturgical Calendar Connection

Display the liturgical calendar and point out the Seventh Sunday of Easter. Today is an interesting day in the liturgical year, because in some dioceses it is replaced by the celebration of the Ascension. The Seventh Sunday of Easter is the final Sunday before Pentecost, which ends Easter Time.

Church Teaching Connection

There are many forms of prayer and devotion in the Catholic tradition. Yet tying them together is an attitude of relationship with God. Our prayers are a method for expressing our faith and maintaining our relationship with the Lord. (For more information, see the *Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy*, 61-64.)

Hear the Word

Use this resource, a Lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.

Gospel Acclamation

Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

John 17:1-11a

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

All make the Sign of the Cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.

Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come. Give glory to your son, so that your son may glorify you, just as you gave him authority over all people, so that your son may give eternal life to all you gave him. Now this is eternal life, that they should know you, the only true God, and the one whom you sent, Jesus Christ. I glorified you on earth by accomplishing the work that you gave me to do. Now glorify me, Father, with you, with the glory that I had with you before the world began.

"I revealed your name to those whom you gave me out of the world. They belonged to you, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you gave me is from you, because the words you gave to me I have given to them, and they accepted them and truly

understood that I came from you, and they have believed that you sent me. I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for the ones you have given me, because they are yours, and everything of mine is yours and everything of yours is mine, and I have been glorified in them. And now I will no longer be in the world, but they are in the world, while I am coming to you.”.

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Everyone may be seated.

Reflect on the Word

When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:

Today's Gospel begins the final part of what we call the "Farewell discourse," which we began hearing on the Fifth Sunday of Easter. The last few chapters of John's account of the Gospel have been dedicated to recounting Jesus' final instructions to his disciples before his arrest. Today's words are Jesus' prayer for his disciples, which is the longest prayer Jesus speaks in any of the Gospel accounts, and the last statement he makes before going to the garden where he is arrested.

► Why would Jesus need to pray?

This isn't the first time that Jesus prays in any of the Gospel accounts. If Jesus is God, obviously he didn't have to ask for help with miracles.

► So what reason would he have for praying?

The answer is *relationship*. God is all about relationship: Father to Son, Son to Father, and both Father and Son to Holy Spirit. This whirlwind of relationship is what we call the Trinity. And one of the most important elements of relationship is conversation: communicating our thoughts and emotions to one another.

► Who is a person whom you have an important relationship with?

► How do you usually communicate with that person?

► How often do you have conversations with that person?

Jesus' prayer in this passage is not only about relationship, it *describes* his relationship with God. He describes the parental relationship between Father and Son, and the purpose for his becoming human. Jesus also describes his relationship with the disciples, and in doing so, reveals the relationship of the disciples to the Father. We call Jesus the great mediator because he embodies the relationship between human and divine.

One of the important things that says in this text is that he is not praying for the world, but rather praying for his disciples.

► What does this mean? Doesn't Jesus care about the rest of the world?

Of course he does! But he is praying for those who follow him precisely *because* he will no longer be in the world. In a way the disciples, and we, *are* Christ's prayer for the world. Maybe a better way of explaining this is to say that we who are disciples of Christ are the ones who must do God's work in the world. So Jesus is praying that we will be able to fulfill that mission.

► How would you describe your relationship with Christ?

► Do you consider yourself a disciple? Why or why not?

Sometimes it can be challenging to understand our own identity as disciples and our relationship with God. It can be especially tough to understand our relationship with the Father. Because Jesus became human, we often find it easier to view him as our brother or teacher. But if that's our relationship with him, then how do we relate to the Father? This question may not have one single answer. Understanding how we each relate to God, to the Trinity, is part of our own unique spiritual journey.

Wrapping It Up

Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the “Church Teaching Connection” on page 200.

Jesus prays as a way of conversing with God. What do your conversations with God like? What do you say? How does God respond?

If you could offer a single prayer for the world or for the Church and know that God would answer it, what would you pray for? Why?

What do you think your role is in Jesus’ plan for the mission of the Christian Church? Do you feel prepared to fulfill that role? Why or why not?

Act on the Word

One-Hour Conversation

Have the students spread out where they can have a little space for reflecting and writing. Provide them with blank paper and writing utensils, or if they use journals, ask them to bring their journals.

Say to teens: For journaling, imagine that you have the ability to have a one-hour conversation with anyone who you are close to or wish you could have stronger relationship with. Maybe you choose a friend or relative, even a relative who has maybe passed away; maybe you choose to have a conversation with God. But imagine that you have one uninterrupted hour to talk with that person, and take some time to journal about the conversation: where would you want to have that conversation? What would you want to say? How would that person respond? What topics would you want to discuss? (Give ten to fifteen minutes for this journaling.)

Reflect back on this imaginary conversation, and we’re going to do some follow-up journaling: How would you describe your relationship with the person you were speaking to? How do you know them? What do you want your relationship with that person to look like? (Give five to ten minutes for this journaling.)

Finally, reflect on other relationships in your life. Are there any changes you wish you could make about how you connect to the people who are important to you? (Give one to three minutes to reflect on this question.)

Table Talk

Have the students form small groups of four to five people. Instruct them to try and find a group with at least one person they don’t know well or ordinarily converse with.

Say to teens: In your small groups, you will have about eight minutes to discuss each of the following questions (*roughly two minutes for each person*).

- ✧ Question 1: How do you prefer to communicate with people? Face to face, or by texting, or social media, or another way? Why do you prefer that way?
- ✧ Question 2: How would you describe your relationship with God?
- ✧ Question 3: Do you pray? Why or why not? How often do you pray?
- ✧ Question 4: Is there any way of praying or conversing with God that you would like to learn more about or be better at?

For the teacher: As a final thought (but not a discussion point) ask students to think about what role prayer plays in their lives. Is it something they do often, or never? Is prayer something they want to have more of, or something that they just don’t get? Remind them that prayer is our method of communicating with God, and that our relationship with God, like any relationship, needs communication to thrive.

Closing Prayer

*Lord Jesus Christ,
you have ascended in glory
and are at the right hand of the Father,
yet you remain here among us and within us.
By the grace of the Holy Spirit,
empower us to be faithful witnesses.
You live and reign for ever and ever.
Amen.*

For Next Sunday

To help teens prepare for next Sunday’s Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at www.ltp.org/lwgr. Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.