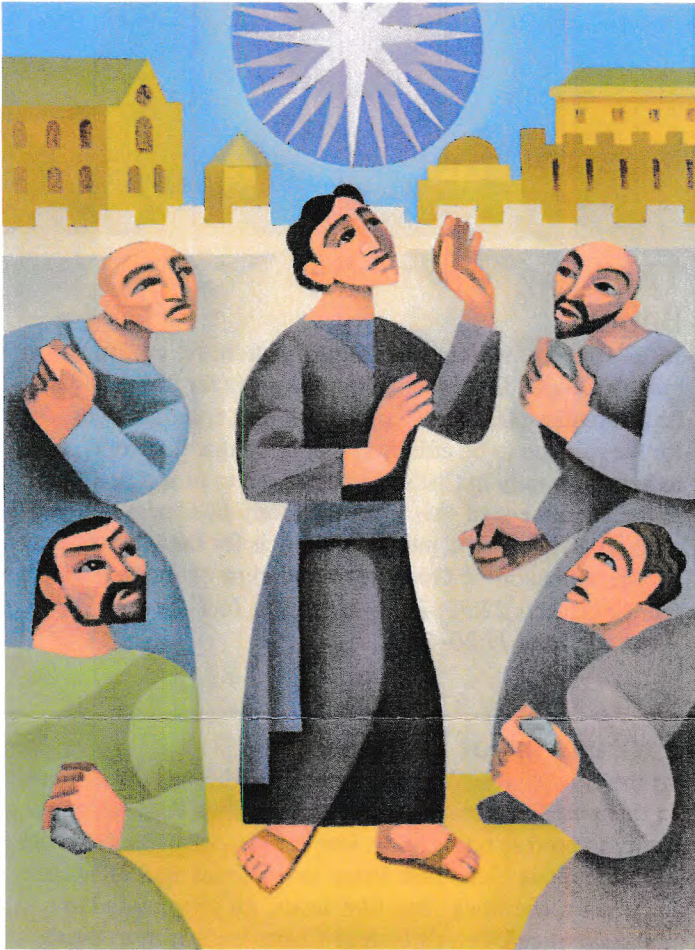


SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER



One in Christ

Almighty and ever-living God,
through the Death and Resurrection
of your Son,
you called us to be witnesses to your glory.
Open our eyes so that we might relish
in your presence
and be stirred from our contentment.
Help us to be one with Christ as you
and he are one.
By enduring death, Stephen, your
chosen servant,
united his heart to Christ and declared
your mighty deeds.
Grant us steadfast faith when confronted
with ridicule and disbelief.
May the Holy Spirit draw us deeper into
the heart of Christ,
filling us with the profound love of Jesus,
so that we might share it with every
living creature.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, May 8, 2016

Jesus' Love Note

Today's Readings: Acts 7:55–60; Psalm 97:1–2, 6–7, 9; Revelation 22:12–14, 16–17, 20; John 17:20–26. In preparing to write this reflection, I encountered today's Gospel in a new light. After years of hearing this Gospel, I heard Jesus' prayer differently, with a broken and vulnerable heart. After all these weeks of Easter, this passage underlines that our God, who reigns over all creation and is exalted on high, profoundly loves and cares for us. Slowly read this text aloud. Pay attention to your reaction to Jesus' tone and especially meditate on the phrase, "Father, they are your gift to me." These powerful words illuminate the depth of Jesus' heart.

As disciples of Christ, we share in this love and have been made one with the Father, Son, and Spirit in the waters of

Baptism. Whether we are like Stephen, who died for Christ, or faithful companions, we are disciples who profess Sunday after Sunday our belief in Jesus, who gives us life. Jesus' Death and glorious Resurrection bear witness to God's unfailing love for us and desire that we be freed from sin.

I think the invitation in this passage is to sit in prayer and give ourselves to Christ in intimate conversation. Surrender your heart to Christ so that it might be filled to the brim with his Word. Let us pray this week that the love of Christ permeate all people and unite us to God. Let us also be filled with the Spirit of Christ and go forth spreading the Word of God so that all may be made one in the Body of Christ.



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, May 9, 2016

Take Courage

Even though the disciples have affirmed their faith in Jesus, he reminds them that the hour is coming when they will abandon him. Have you ever renounced Jesus because of fear or embarrassment? As disciples, we can trust that Christ will give us peace, no matter the mission. Spend some time examining the moments when you need courage. *Today's Readings: Acts 19:1–8; Psalm 68:2–3ab, 4–5acd, 6–7ab; John 16:29–33.*

Tuesday, May 10, 2016

Eternal Life

Jesus has glorified the Father in all the works he has performed. Jesus has revealed God, and those who have come to Jesus have come to know God. God's true nature will be manifest in Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross. Those who live in Christ intimately know God and will have eternal life. Do you recognize the divine presence? How do you reveal God's love? Take a moment to journal today about your life in Christ. *Today's Readings: Acts 20:17–27; Psalm 68:10–11, 20–21; John 17:1–11a.*

Wednesday, May 11, 2016

Protection

The Gospel continues the story from yesterday. Directly addressing his Father, Jesus asks that those who have come to believe in him will be protected from the evil one. In Baptism, we have been united to God through Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit. We are no longer of this world, but pilgrims united to the Trinity. We still know the struggles of this world and yet we trust in the power of God's love and continue to proclaim the Good News. Today, pray for those who do not know Christ. *Today's Readings: Acts 20:28–38; Psalm 68:29–30, 33–35a, 35bc–36ab; John 17:11b–19.*

Thursday, May 12, 2016

Belief

Jesus' prayer, which was begun yesterday, continues in today's Gospel. In this section, Jesus prays for those who will be future disciples. The Church must be a community of love for the mission to be effective; that is, so that the world come to believe wholly in Christ and be united to him. The Church is the sacrament of this love, the Body of Christ that proclaims salvation. The intention today is for the Church, may she be a beacon of God's love and sign of unity. *Today's Readings: Acts 22:30; 26:6–11; Psalm 16:1–2a and 5, 7–8, 9–10, 11; John 17:20–26.*

Friday, May 13, 2016

Profession of Faith

At the time of Jesus' arrest, Peter denied Jesus three times. In this post-Resurrection scene, Jesus offers Peter an opportunity to profess publicly his love for him as a sign of reconciliation. It is clear that Peter loves Jesus and is willing to care for the flock. But like Jesus, all shepherds have to make sacrifices. Peter's love of Christ leads him to death, a death that professes that living in God's love results in eternal life. As you meditate on today's Gospel, consider these questions: How do I profess my faith in Christ? How do I feed the flock of the Lord? *Today's Readings: Acts 25:13b–21; Psalm 103:1–2, 11–12, 19–20ab; John 21:15–19.*

Saturday, May 14, 2016

Feast of St. Matthias, Apostle

Jesus' line, "You did not choose me but I chose you" in today's Gospel always strikes me. God's love is powerful and woos us. It's awesome to think that Christ has chosen us and loves us. Like St. Matthias, we have a chance to respond to this invitation and live out our baptismal call. At the end of the Easter season, consider the joy and love with which God surrounds you. How will you be a herald of this Good News? *Today's Readings: Acts 1:15–17, 20–26; Psalm 113:1–2, 3–4, 5–6, 7–8; John 15:9–17.*

