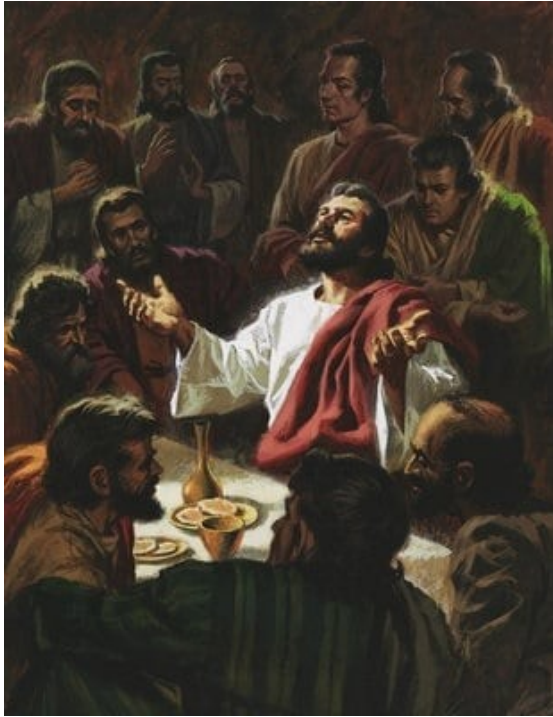


## Seventh Sunday of Easter – Priestly Prayer of Jesus



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### Introduction

The most frequent way of praying that Saint Ignatius uses is that of imagining ourselves in a Gospel scene. We imagine ourselves as a character in the story. We take part in the story, seeing Jesus and all the other people, being aware of what's going on and how we are feeling. The purpose of praying with the imagination is to allow Christ in the Scripture to speak to us. To bring the Gospel stories to life for us. We are not trying to recreate history. It doesn't matter if your imagination takes the story off in a different direction to the Scripture. It doesn't matter if the story takes place in 1st century Palestine or where we live now in the 21st century. What is important is what God wants to say to us through this passage.

Sit and relax by focussing on your breathing for a few minutes so that you can contemplate the Gospel using our imagination.

## **Prayer**

Acknowledge you are in the presence of God by saying the following prayer:

Direct O Lord and guide and influence all that is happening in my mind and heart during this time of prayer: all my moods and feelings, my memories and imaginings; my hopes and desires; may all be directed and influenced to your greater glory, praise and service and to my growth in your Spirit. Amen

Let the Spirit fill my heart with the joy that Jesus wants to share with us, with gratitude for the protection that he has promised us and for the wisdom to discern his truth.

## **Reading      John 17:11-19**

Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and said,  
“Holy Father,  
keep those you have given me true to your name,  
so that they may be one like us.  
While I was with them,  
I kept those you had given me true to your name.  
I have watched over them and not one is lost  
except the one who chose to be lost,  
and this was to fulfil the scriptures.  
But now I am coming to you  
and while still in the world I say these things  
to share my joy with them to the full.  
I passed your word on to them,  
and the world hated them,  
because they belong to the world  
no more than I belong to the world.  
I am not asking you to remove them from the world,  
but to protect them from the evil one.  
They do not belong to the world  
any more than I belong to the world.  
Consecrate them in the truth; your word is truth.  
As you sent me into the world,  
I have sent them into the world,  
and for their sake I consecrate myself  
so that they too may be consecrated in truth.”

## Contemplation

On this, the Seventh Sunday of Easter, we see Jesus in this Gospel passage still in the company of his disciples at the Last Supper. This is the final part of his discourse and it consists of a long prayer called the Priestly Prayer of Jesus in which he prays for himself (verses 1-10), his disciples (verses 11-19) and those who come later to be his disciples (verses 20-26). So with this in mind, let us enter the scene and find a place within it as we listen to Jesus pray for me, one of his disciples.

- Who are you within the story? Are you one of the disciples? Perhaps a person that is not specifically mentioned in the printed story?
- What is the mood of Jesus and those present? What do you notice about those present and your surroundings?
- You have just heard Jesus tell you that he is the Good Shepherd, he is the vine and you are the branches and to love one another. So what is the atmosphere in the room like now? Do you feel peaceful? Comforted because you feel Jesus is watching out for you? Attentive because you don't know what Jesus will say next? Argumentative because you don't think you can accomplish what Jesus is asking you to do? Confused because there is so much to take in? Tired because the discourse has gone on for a long time?
- What is going through your mind as you listen to Jesus praying for you? Praying for your loyalty to the message of the Scriptures? Praying for unity amongst each other and unity in the world? Do you feel his prayer will benefit you? Comforted in the confirmation that Jesus is looking out for you? A sense of closeness to Jesus and his Father?
- How do you feel when Jesus says that because you have accepted his message you will be hated by the world as he himself was hated? Afraid? Protected because Jesus is praying for you? Bold because you have heard Jesus ask the Father for joy, protection and holiness to be given to you?
- How do you feel when Jesus says that he is not asking the Father to remove you from this world despite the fact you will be hated but asks for your protection instead? Do you realise that it is only by belonging to the world you will be able to

proclaim the Good News? That you cannot achieve what Jesus is asking by distancing yourself from the world?

- How do you feel when Jesus prays that you be consecrated in truth, the truth of God himself? Do you realise that living in the truth consists in the living out your life in harmony with the will of the Father and the Way that Jesus has shown you during the time you have spent with him? Do you realise that by being consecrated to the truth means bringing that sincerity and integrity to the world? Do you realise that you do this by living a life of love and service to all? Do you realise that you have the full blessing of Jesus when he says: “I consecrate myself for them, so that they also may be consecrated in truth?”
- Do you feel Jesus’ love for you in this discourse? Do you feel one with him?

Feel what is going on inside you as you listen to Jesus’ words. Is there anything you want to ask him? Approach Jesus and talk to him about where you are being sent and what you need in order to be sent into the world. Talk to him about what is preventing you from the mission he has called you for. Give thanks for his prayers for you.

Let us now spend ten minutes in quiet contemplation

### **End Prayer    Suscipe of St. Ignatius of Loyola**

Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty,  
my memory, my understanding,  
and my entire will,  
All I have and call my own.  
You have given all to me.  
To you, Lord, I return it.  
Everything is yours; do with it what you will.  
Give me only your love and your grace,  
that is enough for me.