Reflection Friday Week 32 St Josaphat 2021

Saint Josaphat was born in the Ukraine of Orthodox parents. In 1595 at the Union of Brest the Ruthenian Church united with Catholic Rome but preserved its own liturgy. This resulted in a schism. One party wanted to remain Orthodox with Moscow and Constantinople. The other accepted the Union. The presence of the Greek Uniates complicated the issue and they remain a living church today. Josaphat joined the first monastery of the order of St Basil united to the Catholic Church: he was the first to do so. He was ordained priest and, eventually and reluctantly, appointed bishop of Polotsk in 1617. Although Sigismund III Vasa, King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania, supported the union, the local aristocracy were against it because it threatened their control of ecclesiastical benefices. Plotting with the Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem, who visited the Ukraine in 1621, they stirred up trouble and as a result Josaphat was murdered by a mob in 1623 while on a pastoral visit to Vitebsk.

Read the passage from John 17 for today's feast often and be reminded that both the Father and the Son choose (or better) desire to live in us and they do so out of love. This is another reason why Pope Francis called us on the synodal pathway because, in our listening and conversations, Pope Francis believes we will come to realise their presence in others and in ourselves more concretely. The Synodal Process will help us experience Church in a whole new way and as Paul suggests our roles may differ but being more united in the one body, we will more effectively lead others to Christ who will want to join our family which has an open door so that all may enter. Josaphat worked for Unity, we ask Josaphat to pray for us.