

## SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

YEAR A

### PRAYER OF THE DAY:

O God, we belong to you  
and to Jesus, your Son.  
Help us to pray to you,  
and as we pray,  
may we get to know you  
more and more each day.  
We ask you this through Jesus,  
who lives with you,  
forever and ever.

### FOCUS OF THE READINGS:

Both readings are concerned with prayer and the future of the church.

In our first reading, we see the apostles along with Mary the mother of Jesus, the brothers of Jesus, and other people gathered in the upper room. They have been promised the Holy Spirit, and they wait in prayer. The Holy Spirit will empower them to carry on the work of Jesus. Notice that not only the apostles but also other believers are empowered, for it is together that they constitute *church*.

All of Chapter 17 of John's Gospel is Jesus' prayer for the church. A portion of this prayer, sometimes called the "priestly prayer of Christ," is read on the Seventh Sunday of Easter in each cycle. The focus of the portion in today's Gospel is the gift of eternal life made possible by the death and resurrection of Jesus. While the other three Gospels use parables to describe the reign of God or the reign of heaven, only here does an evangelist attempt a definition of eternal life. Our salvation—eternal life—is knowing God and Jesus Christ. Knowing, in the biblical sense, does not mean simply having an intellectual grasp of God, but rather being one with God and Jesus Christ. Throughout the prayer, Jesus prays that we will have that oneness.

### FIRST READING: *Acts 1:12-14*

*This is a reading from the Acts of the Apostles.*

After Jesus was taken up to heaven from Mt. Olivet, the apostles went back to Jerusalem where they were staying. All of the apostles—Peter and Andrew, James and John, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James, Simon and Jude—spent their time in the upper room praying. They prayed with some of the women and with Mary, the mother of Jesus, who stayed there with them.

*The Word of the Lord.*

### RESPONSE: *Psalm 130*

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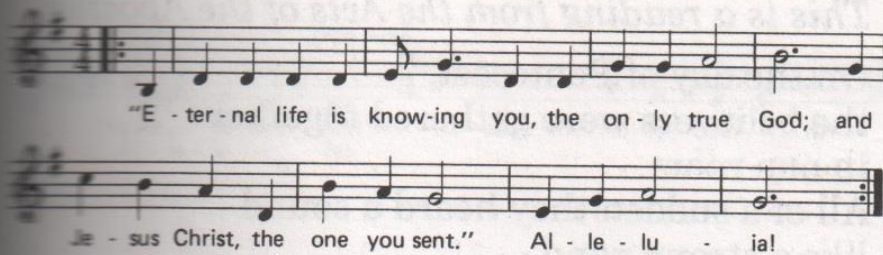
Lis-ten to my prayer, I trust in you my God. God.

VERSES:

1. In my heart I pray to you. Hear my voice and come to me.  
2. My soul hopes in you my God. You have saved me by your love.  
3. My soul waits for you my God like the night that waits for day.



## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:



## GOSPEL: *John 14:1-11*

*This is a reading from the Gospel of John.*

As Jesus was teaching his disciples,  
he said this prayer:

"Father, the time is now here.  
Glorify me  
so that you will be glorified, too.  
You have given me power  
to give eternal life to everyone.  
And this is what eternal life is:  
to know you, the only true God;  
and to know Jesus Christ, the one you sent.

"I did everything you sent me on earth to do.  
I told the people about you.  
And now they know that I came from you  
and that you sent me.  
And so I pray for them  
because they are yours,  
and they are mine."

*The Gospel of the Lord.*

## REFLECTING ON THE READINGS WITH CHILDREN:

*After the first reading, ask the children, "What did you hear? Who can remember who was gathered in the upper room?"*

Children enjoy memorizing, and while this is not the focus, it will be helpful for them to know the names of the apostles. But be sure they realize that others were there as well, especially Mary, the mother of Jesus.

Mary appears very infrequently in the New Testament, but over the course of the three-year cycle, the children should see that when she is mentioned, it is because she has an important role to play in the church. It is through this biblical view that the children will grow into a deep and rich understanding of Mary.

*Before the Gospel, explain to the children that Jesus made this prayer just before he died. He is talking to God about his mission on earth. Invite them to listen to his prayer.*

*After the Gospel, ask the children:*

- What did you hear?
- What did Jesus say in his prayer?
- What did Jesus say eternal life is?
- What does it mean to "know God" and to "know Jesus"?

Help the children see the difference between knowing *about* someone and *knowing* someone. To know someone also involves entering into a relationship of love.

God is often an abstraction to children. They will understand better what it means to know and love Jesus. We love Jesus because we know all the wonderful things he does for us. And most of all we love Jesus because he loves us so much and was willing to suffer and die for us. Through all of Easter we have been hearing that Jesus is always with us. And because we love him, we will live with him forever.