

SEVENTH Sunday of Easter

Gospel Reading *John 17 : 20-26*

Jesus prays for his disciples.

Reflection on the Gospel Reading

On the seventh Sunday of Easter, we always read from the 17th chapter of John's Gospel. This chapter of John's Gospel comes at the conclusion of Jesus' Farewell Discourse delivered to the

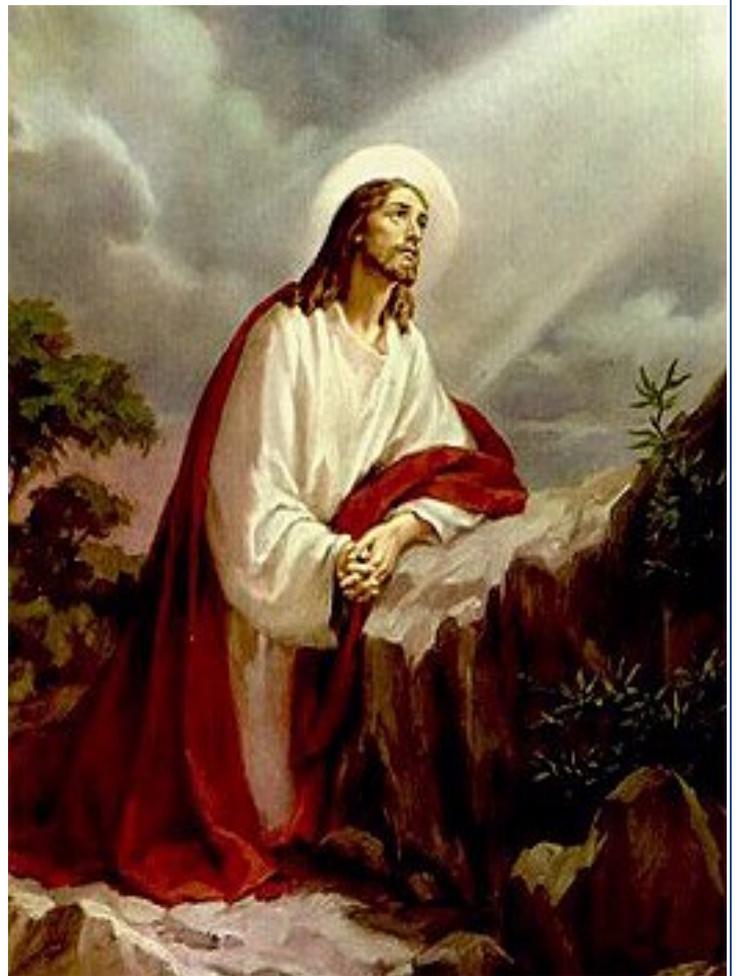
disciples at the Last Supper. The whole of this chapter is a prayer of Jesus, commending himself to the Father and expressing his care and concern for his disciples. At the end of this prayer, Jesus and his disciples depart for the garden, and Jesus is arrested.

Several important themes appear in this prayer of Jesus. First, Jesus' prayer reaffirms the complete union between Jesus and the Father. Throughout John's Gospel, Jesus has been presented as the one who pre-existed with the Father and as the one sent by the Father to do his work on earth. In today's reading, we hear Jesus ask that the unity he experiences with the Father be extended to all who believe in him. He prays that we be one with each other, with him, and with the Father.

We are reminded that Christ is the source of Christian unity. Through Christ, we are united with one another and with God our Father.

Belief is a major theme in the Gospel of John. It begins in the prologue and continues in the response to Jesus' signs. Belief is the reason Jesus performs signs (2:11, 4:53, 6:69, 9:38) and the reason signs have been recorded in the Gospel (20:30-31). Here Jesus prays not only for those who believe in him but for all who will come to believe in him. And he prays that the love of the Father in him may also be in all who believe so that Jesus might be in them as well.

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