

7. March 2025

THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN
“Jesus intercedes for His disciples”

Jn 17:1-12

When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify thy Son that the Son may glorify thee, since thou hast given him power over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom thou hast given him. And this is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. I glorified thee on earth, having accomplished the work which thou gavest me to do; and now, Father, glorify thou me in thy own presence with the glory which I had with thee before the world was made. “I have manifested thy name to the men whom thou gavest me out of the world; thine they were, and thou gavest them to me, and they have kept thy word. Now they know that everything that thou hast given me is from thee; for I have given them the words which thou gavest me, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from thee; and they have believed that thou didst send me. I am praying for them; I am not praying for the world but for those whom thou hast given me, for they are thine; all mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to thee. Holy Father, keep them in thy name, which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. While I was with them, I kept them in thy name, which thou hast given me; I have guarded them, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled. ”

The power that Jesus exercises over His own is to give them eternal life. This is the wonderful gift given to those who acknowledge the one true God and the one He sent, Jesus Christ.

This single sentence from the Lord would suffice to understand the importance of His mission, for every human being is called to share in this gift of living in union with God for all eternity. After His resurrection, Jesus would send His disciples into the whole world so that all peoples might know God's plan to give them eternal life.

Jesus uses this hour to prepare the way for people to be reconciled to God. This is the work that His heavenly Father has given Him to do and by which He glorifies God. He is now on His way to do this work. Jesus does not hesitate. His gaze is fixed on the Father, whom He wants to glorify and of whose goodness, which shines in all His words and deeds, He wants to convince people.

His own people understood this. The Father entrusted them to Him and Jesus cared for them in His name. This is true not only for His disciples at that time, but for all those who, through their witness, have embraced the faith throughout the centuries. It is also true for us who have found faith and followed the Lord through the message of the Church. We know that we are guided and loved by the Good Shepherd, in whom we have recognised the heavenly Father.

Can there be anything more important than letting people know that they have a loving Father in heaven who sent His Son so that we can be with Him forever? And this eternal life with Him is incomparably more beautiful and fulfilling than our earthly existence, which, although it already shines with true light thanks to faith, is still marked by so much suffering. As we wander through this world, God, in His goodness, takes pity on our weaknesses and transgressions when we come to Him and ask for forgiveness. Because He loves us, He is willing to grant it.

As believers, we can put our trust in a particular word and gesture of the Lord: Jesus prayed for His own. This prayer is more powerful than all our sincere efforts to remain faithful to Him. Jesus intercedes for us before His Father and asks Him to protect us. Now that His departure is imminent, He gives back to the Father the disciples whom he entrusted to Him and whom He cared for in His name. Jesus brings His own into this unity with the Father, and no one can snatch them out of His hand if they remain faithful to Him (Jn 10:29).

It must have been a deep sorrow for the Lord that the "son of destruction" should be lost and that one who shared His bread should betray Him (Ps 41:10). Nevertheless, this terrible possibility exists and should be a wake-up call to the faithful so that they never stray from the ways of the Lord.

But even more important for our journey is our trust in the Lord and His love. Just as He prepared His disciples for all the dangers that would come upon them, so He does

with us today. We can be sure of this because the Word of God is infallible. And we know that we are in God's hands, as St Joan of Arc reminded her soldiers at the start of the battle.

We still have a long way to go on earth, and we will only be able to join God in eternity when we have completed our race. But the Lord has provided us with everything we need to reach our goal and bear abundant fruit.