

## **Sunday, May 29, 2022 – Seventh Sunday of Easter**

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### **Introduction**

It is possible to hear in Jesus' high priestly prayer, a prayer he offered shortly before his death, the petitions of the ascended Christ for his own throughout history—to our day—and beyond. Jesus prays for us. In holy baptism we become believers in God, have our robes washed in the flood of Christ's forgiveness, and receive the gift of life forever with all the saints.

### **Prayer of the Day**

O God, form the minds of your faithful people into your one will. Make us love what you command and desire what you promise, that, amid all the changes of this world, our hearts may be fixed where true joy is found, your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

### **First Reading: Acts 16:16-34**

*Those who had enslaved a girl and used her powers to tell fortunes threw Paul and Silas into jail for ordering the spirit to come out of her and consequently ruining their business. In prison, Paul and Silas bring the good news of the gospel to the jailer and his family.*

<sup>16</sup>One day, as we were going to the place of prayer, we met a slave-girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners a great deal of money by fortune-telling. <sup>17</sup>While she followed Paul and us, she would cry out, "These men are slaves of the Most High God, who proclaim to you a way of salvation." <sup>18</sup>She kept doing this for many days. But Paul, very much annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I order you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And it came out that very hour.

<sup>19</sup>But when her owners saw that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the authorities. <sup>20</sup>When they had brought them before the magistrates, they said, "These men are disturbing our city; they are Jews <sup>21</sup>and are advocating customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to adopt or observe." <sup>22</sup>The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates had them stripped of their clothing and ordered them to be beaten with rods. <sup>23</sup>After they had given them a severe flogging, they threw them into prison and ordered the jailer to keep them securely. <sup>24</sup>Following these instructions, he put them in the innermost cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

<sup>25</sup>About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. <sup>26</sup>Suddenly there was an earthquake, so violent that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened. <sup>27</sup>When the jailer woke up and saw the prison doors wide open, he drew his

sword and was about to kill himself, since he supposed that the prisoners had escaped. <sup>28</sup>But Paul shouted in a loud voice, “Do not harm yourself, for we are all here.” <sup>29</sup>The jailer called for lights, and rushing in, he fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. <sup>30</sup>Then he brought them outside and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” <sup>31</sup>They answered, “Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.” <sup>32</sup>They spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. <sup>33</sup>At the same hour of the night he took them and washed their wounds; then he and his entire family were baptized without delay. <sup>34</sup>He brought them up into the house and set food before them; and he and his entire household rejoiced that he had become a believer in God.

## Psalm 97

<sup>1</sup>The LORD reigns; let the | earth rejoice;  
let the multitude of the | isles be glad.

<sup>2</sup>**Clouds and darkness sur- | round the LORD,  
righteousness and justice are the foundations | of God’s throne.**

<sup>3</sup>Fire goes be- | fore the LORD,  
burning up enemies on | every side.

<sup>4</sup>**Lightnings light | up the world;  
the earth | sees and trembles.**

<sup>5</sup>The mountains | melt like wax  
before the Lord of | all the earth.

<sup>6</sup>**The heavens declare your righteous- | ness, O LORD,  
and all the peoples | see your glory.**

<sup>7</sup>Confounded be all who worship carved images and delight | in false gods!  
Bow down before the LORD, | all you gods.

<sup>8</sup>**Zion hears and is glad, and the cities of Ju- | dah rejoice,  
because of your judg- | ments, O LORD.**

<sup>9</sup>For you are the LORD, most high over | all the earth;  
you are exalted far a- | bove all gods.

<sup>10</sup>**You who love the | LORD, hate evil!  
God guards the lives of the saints and rescues them from the hand | of the wicked.**

<sup>11</sup>Light dawns | for the righteous,  
and joy for the hon- | est of heart.

<sup>12</sup>**Rejoice in the | LORD, you righteous,  
and give thanks to God’s | holy name.**

## Second Reading: Revelation 22:12-14, 16-17, 20-21

*The ascended Christ, hidden from our sight, promises to come again. We eagerly pray, "Come, Lord Jesus," with all who respond to this invitation.*

<sup>12</sup>"See, I am coming soon; my reward is with me, to repay according to everyone's work. <sup>13</sup>I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."

<sup>14</sup>Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they will have the right to the tree of life and may enter the city by the gates.

<sup>16</sup>"It is I, Jesus, who sent my angel to you with this testimony for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star."

<sup>17</sup>The Spirit and the bride say, "Come."

And let everyone who hears say, "Come."

And let everyone who is thirsty come.

Let anyone who wishes take the water of life as a gift.

<sup>20</sup>The one who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon."

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

<sup>21</sup>The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all the saints. Amen.

## Gospel: John 17:20-26

*Jesus prays that the life of his followers will be characterized by an intimate unity of identity with God. To be so identified with God means also to share in God's mission: to proclaim the word that will bring others into this same unity.*

[Jesus prayed:] <sup>20</sup>"I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, <sup>21</sup>that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

<sup>22</sup>The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, <sup>23</sup>I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. <sup>24</sup>Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

<sup>25</sup>"Righteous Father, the world does not know you, but I know you; and these know that you have sent me. <sup>26</sup>I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."

## Prayers of Intercession

Set free from captivity to sin and death, we pray to the God of resurrection for the church, people in need, and all of creation, saying “God in your mercy,” and responding, “hear our prayer.”

*A brief silence.*

Holy God, make your people one as you and your Son are one. Extend the gifts we have been given by your Spirit to all people, especially those experiencing division or questioning your love. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Make worthy the work of scientists who look to the stars and planets, as well as scientists who look to atoms and molecules. Bring innovation and well-being to humanity through their discoveries. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Keep in our minds those who have died in war, both military and civilians (*and we're mindful, particularly, of the people of Ukraine and surrounding regions*). May we honor them by seeking peaceful solutions to the conflicts that arise among nations and peoples. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Grant freedom to all who are overwhelmed by chronic illness, depression, or constant worry (*especially those who we name at this time, aloud or silently on our hearts...*). Open them to receive health and salvation in Christ Jesus through the Spirit's gift of faith. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Stir imagination and understanding throughout the church in the work of poets, theologians, and hymnwriters. Lead us into new visions and fresh expressions of your presence. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Unite us with the saints who have died and been raised in Jesus. Train us to wait with eager longing for Christ to come again, even as we sense his presence with us now. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

In your mercy, O God, respond to these prayers, and renew us by your life-giving Spirit; through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

**Amen.**

## ***A reflection for this Seventh Sunday of Easter...***

### Praying for You

Today's gospel reading is first and foremost a prayer. It is Jesus' prayer, and we are given the privilege of listening in as he prays on behalf of his disciples and people of all times and places. Listeners are given a glimpse of Jesus' mission for the world—that all may be drawn into the life of the triune God. On the eve of his death, Jesus entrusts this particular community of disciples—but also our communities, our lives, and our world—into the care of God.

What is it Jesus is doing when he prays? What is it the church does when it prays on behalf of the world and other people? To be prayed for by another is to know one's life is cared for and has value to the one praying on your behalf. It is to know that much of the future is out of one's own control but rests instead in the care of the Triune God. To be prayed for is to be vulnerable, dependent, and deeply loved.

Here is the astoundingly good news: Jesus prays for you, and for the communities in which we find ourselves. Whether your cup is empty or full, whether your community is in crisis or experiencing joy, whether your future is foggy or clear, Jesus loves you deeply and your life is bound to the God who loved you before the foundations of the world. On the eve of his death, Jesus entrusted your life and the church's life and its entire future to the Father. What glorious good news that the future rests in the care of the Triune God, and that we, the church, are set free to make God known to the world.

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