

Reflection for the Seventh Sunday of Easter. John 17: 1-11

The Gospel of John differs from the other gospels in that it was written some years after the other three gospels. Tradition gives the author as John, one of the original twelve disciples of Jesus. So, he was there, and he has had time to think it over and relive it over the years. John has had time to reflect on that which he witnessed and put it into context. This passage comes as a part of Jesus' preparation of the disciples for the horrors of His arrest and crucifixion, the joy of the resurrection, and of their future role.

Jesus prays; we read of Jesus praying on numerous occasions in the Gospels. Prayer is something that is mostly personal. We do not know what people say in their prayers, what people hear in their prayers. This time Jesus is praying out loud. Jesus is not going to be around for his disciples, so he is entrusting them to the Father, to God. He knows that they will be at risk in a world that has hated Him and will hate them because of their association with Him. Their calling as Apostles sets them apart from the world and they need protection from the world. This is what the prayer is all about. They need to be kept apart from the 'world' and all its malign influences. Up until now Jesus has cared for them and guided them, led them and inspired them. Now Jesus is returning to the Father and He is entrusting them into the Father's care. Jesus is praying that what He has begun will be completed through His Father.

As we face the joys and sorrows of this world, we may struggle. At times we may feel that we are wallowing in the depths of despair. We do not know what to do or which way we should go. We have been entrusted into God's care and we should rest in this. God the Father, who loves us and is aware of all our sufferings, who laughs and cries with us.

"All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one as we are one."

John, the writer of this Gospel must have gone over and over this prayer in his mind many times before he committed it to paper, He would have prayed it over and over himself. This should be our prayer too; Holy Father protect us in your name so that we may be one as you are one with Jesus.

St Patrick's Prayer

*Christ be with me, Christ within me,
Christ behind me and before me.
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort and restore.
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ in hearts of all who know me.
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger,
Christ in quiet and in roar.
Love, blessed Trinity of three,
Bound in unity
Who guides my journey.
I will arise with strength of heaven
Trusting in Your light
To guide my journey
Shine before me
Lead me home.
Power to guide me, might to hold me,
Wisdom teach me, watching o'er me.
Ear to hear me, hand to guard me,
Love to conquer every fear.*