

TRINITY NEWS

Easter VII The Personal Lord's Prayer in John 17:1-26

What would our understanding of prayer be without the prayer that begins, "Our Father in heaven"? We call it the Lord's Prayer, but the Latin title, Pater Noster, "Our Father", says it better. It is a communal prayer, though we use it on our own. Jesus may have prayed the prayer that he taught his disciples on his own, though he would probably not have said "Our Father". He preferred to say, "My Father". The personal Lord's Prayer of Jesus is found in John 17.

The prayer at John 17:1-26 is not only a personal prayer of Jesus, but that is its major thrust. It is also about his disciples and his prayer for their mission and well-being in the world. The passage set for today is 17:13-19, but the prayer needs to be considered as a whole.

The Translation of John 17:1-26 in The Message Bible of Eugene Peterson has opened it up for me. I checked it with the Greek text and was delighted with the insights and the assurances it offered.

"Now I'm returning to you. I'm saying these things in the world's hearing so my people can experience my joy completed in them. I gave them your word; the godless world hated them because of it because they didn't join the world's ways just as I didn't join the worlds' ways. I'm not asking that you take them out of the world but that you guard them from the Evil One. They are no more defined by the world than I am defined by the world. Make them holy – consecrated - with the truth; your word is consecrating truth. In the same way that you gave me a mission in the world, I give them a mission in the world. I'm consecrating myself for their sakes so they'll be truth-consecrated in their mission" (John 17:13-19).

"So my people can experience my joy completed in them." Jesus was not satisfied with expressing his joy about his relationship with God the Father. He longed for others to experience it also.

"I am not asking that you take them out of the world, but that you guard them from the Evil One."

We have a life to live, and religion is not an escape route. Jesus cried out to God at the Cross when he was confronted by Evil in its extremities. So do we cry out, but we don't shudder with fear, though we are wary of evil scenes and the people in them. Someone has overcome it before us and we trust in his power in the Spirit to quench evil.

“Make them holy – consecrated- with the truth. Your word is consecrating truth.”

This is a cry to God to unleash his Comforter, his Spirit of protection and guidance.

Jesus gave us a mission in the world:

1. To live the Jesus life. That is, to love like Jesus and make his love known.
2. To converse with the Father in the name of Jesus and pray with the Spirit of the Living God as our channel to the Heart of God.

As Paul says in Romans chapter 8, we don't know how to pray unless the Spirit of Jesus whispers our words to the One who hears everything.

This prayer of Jesus is about the spiritual transformation of his followers as much as it is about his enormous love of the “Father of all lights”.

When we bogged down in details in the Church we may forget the compelling main story. Peterson's translation brings the Personal Lord's Prayer at John 17 into the Church with energy and a heart-fulfilling **Message**.
Bishop Arthur Jones

THIS WEEK:

Monday.

- Finance committee meeting, 5:30pm, Parish Office.
- Vestry meeting, 6:30pm, Rectory.

Wednesday.

- Bible study, 10 a.m.
- Group discussion, 7:30pm, Parish office.

Thursday.

- Midweek Eucharist, 10:00am, Chapel.

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS: PENTECOST SUNDAY

Acts 2:1-11, Psalm 104; 1 Corinthians 12:4-13; John 20:19-23 *or*
John 14:8-17
