

7th Sunday of the Easter

Acts 1:12-14; 1 Pt 4:13-16; Jn 17:1-11a

The season of Easter is nearly at an end. The central theme of today's readings is a challenge to us to rejoice in our suffering for the Faith because the more we suffer the more we are identified with Jesus who has liberated us from the bondage of sin by his suffering and death. The first reading tells us how the apostles waited in prayer for the promised coming of the Holy Spirit, who would enable them to preach and bear witness to Christ in spite of persecutions. Today Responsorial Psalm (Ps 27), has us sing, "The Lord is my Light and my salvation; /whom should, I fear? The Lord is my life's refuge; /of whom should I be afraid?" In the second reading, Peter challenges his early Christian audience and us to view and accept sufferings as an opportunity to be more fully one with Jesus. The Gospel gives us the first part of the "**High Priestly Prayer**" in which Jesus prays for himself and for protection and unity for his disciples.

We need to center our Christian life on prayer. Christian prayer has prayer-forms for individual Christians and for communities. These include individual prayers, the prayers of the liturgy, and para-liturgical prayers/services, such as Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. There are also different kinds of prayer, including vocal prayer, the Rosary, and contemplative prayer. In the final assessment, prayer means getting into contact with God, raising our minds and hearts to God, listening to Him. and talking to Him. We should try to set aside, some time each day to spend with God in prayer. Our talk with God can include praise and thanksgiving, pleas for forgiveness and prayer for our needs. A few minutes spent in reading the Bible is a good way of listening to God.

We need to glorify Christ by the lives we live. When we love even when it costs, who will stand with the poor and oppressed, who will use their money as a gift from God to bless other lives, who will use their money to guarantee that the Gospel is preached all over the world, we glorify God. We also glorify God by our prayer life and our faithful observance of the Lord's Day. We glorify Jesus by offering Him humble and selfless service in our brothers and sisters – distributing lunches to the homeless begging on the street-corner, volunteering at homeless shelters, teaching children, helping with after-school care, teaching Vacation Bible School. Finally, we glorify God by speaking kind, merciful, loving and encouraging words to everyone we encounter, and praying for them and their needs.