



AT HOME SERVICE

Sunday 1st June 2025

compiled by Angela Banfield - Lay Assistant

Welcome to our service for Sunday 1st of June. Today we are thinking about Jesus' Prayer for his disciples; both then and now. John in chapter 17 records these deeply personal prayers so we can know more about the height, and breadth, and depth of Jesus love; and about his commitment to all mankind, to his church, the world, and to you and me.

We Pray:

Heavenly Father as we pause from our business to worship you in Trinity, Father, Son and Spirit. We come in confidence and in the assurance of your perfect love for all, made plain in Jesus.

We thank you for this gift of grace, through which we know our sins are forgiven; we thank you for your indwelling Spirit, whose assurance and guidance keeps us on the road of discipleship, and we thank you for your creative power and enduring love for us all and all creation. Help us to serve and please you, to do your will in our lives and to encourage all goodness everywhere. In Jesus name we say **Amen**.

Our hymn is very long, with it's beautiful refrain of praise between each verse.

Take time to read each verse and use it as a continuation of our prayers.

Hymn: 99 STF

1] All creatures of our God and King,
lift up your voice and with us sing,
alleluia, alleluia!

O burning sun with golden beam,
and silver moon with softer gleam:

*O praise him, O praise him,
alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!*

2] O rushing wind that is so strong,
and clouds that sail in heaven along
O praise him, alleluia!

O rising morn, in praise rejoice;
and lights of evening, find a voice:

3] O flowing water, pure and clear,
make music for your Lord to hear,
sing 'Praise him, alleluia!'

O fire so masterful and bright,
giving to all both warmth and light:

4] Dear mother earth, who day by day
unfolds rich blessings on our way,
O praise him, alleluia!
The flowers and fruits that bloom and grow
let him his glory also show:

5] And all who are of tender heart
forgiving others, take your part,
sing, 'Praise him, alleluia!'
All who long pain and sorrow bear,
praise God, and on him cast your care:

6] And now most kind and gentle death,
waiting to hush our fading breath,
O praise him, alleluia!
You homeward lead the child of God,
and Christ the Lord the way has trod:

7] Let all things their creator bless,
and worship him in humbleness;
O praise him, alleluia!
Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son,
and praise the Spirit, Three in One:

St. Francis of Assisi (1182-1226) Translated by William Henry Draper (1855-1933)

John 17: 20 - 26

"I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you Father, are in me and I am with you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one. 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 you have loved me. Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, because you loved me before the foundation of the world. Righteous Father, the world does not know you, but I know you; and these know that you have sent me. I made your name known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."

Reflection

Over the years since Jesus prayed these words, we acknowledge with sadness that as a people, the Church of Christ has been divided on too many occasions and for too many reasons. The awful schism between the Eastern and Western branches of Christianity in 1054, was the result of growing differences of opinion over centuries, and led to the official establishment of the Orthodox Church and their departure from Roman Catholicism. This sounds ok now, but at the time it meant heartbreak for many and opened the door to a fundamental distrust in organised religion and a weakening of their missional calling. Jesus actually prays that:

"they will become completely one so that the world may know that you have sent me"

As individuals we may feel that our understanding of God's will is the right and only understanding to have. Others who have a different understanding feel the same, and so the void between denominations and strongly held opinions has been widened. Although today there have been strides towards Christian unity, it is interesting to know that what the general public often sees, are the arguments and hostilities, even the outright competition between individual churches and their members.

We might be comfortable with our own beliefs and choose to worship where we feel at one with those around us, but I wonder how comfortable we would feel worshipping in a different and theologically challenging church?

Probably if nothing is preached to annoy or upset us, we'd be ok, but it's how we handle those differences when we hear things at odds with our opinions that are important. Do we listen with love and patience, willing to hear another point of view; or do we storm out, or leave at the close of service vowing never to darken those doors again?

Jesus knew how difficult Christian Unity would be but, from his prayer, we realise that whatever our differences are, we need to hold each other in love and respect, maybe not understanding why some people think as they do, but accepting their opinions whilst remaining faithful to our own. If it was going to be easy, I don't think Jesus would have been praying for us just before his death on the cross, he knew mankind perfectly well, and because his desire is for us all to be one, I believe with his presence and power it is possible, and most definitely God's will. We must never let our differences stand in the way of the good news that Jesus, is Lord of all.

Amen.

Prayers of intercession:

Heavenly Father we pray for your church today, especially thinking of our brothers and sisters who believe differently to us. Bless them and strengthen them and help them to accept us as we accept them. Lord we all believe in Jesus our Saviour, in him may we find unity.

Heavenly Father we pray for those living in war zones. We remember that Jesus taught mankind to be peacemakers, and yet wars are fought between people of faith, wars are fought between families, wars are fought within families. Fill their hearts with compassion and care for each other and prompt us to respond without judgement to all their needs.

Lord Jesus you are the Prince of Peace we pray that war will end.

Heavenly Father we pray for King Charles and the royal family. We pray for our government and all in parliament. We pray for the world's leaders and those whose wealth has made them powerful. Lord Jesus, you never flinched from doing good and speaking truth. May they hear your voice, guiding them to rule in ways that bless and prosper all mankind throughout your world. In Jesus' name we say **Amen**

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven hallowed be your name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever. **Amen**

Hymn: 690 STF

1] The church's one foundation Is Jesus Christ her Lord;
she is his new creation by water and the word:
from heaven he came and sought her to be his holy bride;
with his own blood he bought her, and for her life he died.

2] Elect from every nation, yet one o'er all the earth,
her charter of salvation, one Lord, one faith, one birth;
one holy name she blesses, partakes one holy food,
and to one hope she presses, with every grace endued.

3] Though with a scornful wonder men see her sore oppressed,
by schisms rent asunder, by heresies distressed;
yet saints their watch are keeping their cry goes up, "how long?"
And soon the night of weeping shall be the morn of song.

4] Mid toil and tribulation, and tumult of her war
she waits the consummation of peace for evermore;
till with the vision glorious her longing eyes are blessed,
and the whole Church victorious shall be the church at rest.

5] Yet she on earth has union with God, the Three in One,
and mystic sweet communion with those whose rest is won.
O happy ones and Holy! Lord give us grace that we
like them, the meek and lowly, on high May dwell with thee.

Samuel John Stone (1832-1900)

May the blessing of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be with you all for evermore. Amen

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