

Date: May 17, 2026 (Easter 7)

1. Texts: Acts 1:6-14; Ps. 68:1-10, 33-36; 1 Peter 4:12-14, 5:6-11; John 17:1-11.
2. Subject: Christology.
3. Topic: Jesus as model and impetus for prayer.
4. Aim: encourage, guide.
5. Proposition: "Jesus the Christ was the Son of God who prayed to God."

THE CHRIST, THE SON AND PRAYER

We all know that Jesus is the Christ. We even turn that title into his last name—Jesus Christ. This means that we also know Jesus is the Son of God, however difficult that is to define. But it is one of our fundamental truths: Jesus the Christ is the Son of God.

So, it may seem strange that this Christ *prays to God*, but he does.

Now during those days Jesus went out to the mountain to pray; and he spent the night in prayer to God.¹

After Jesus had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray.²

Now when all the people were baptized...and [Jesus] was praying...³

But Jesus would withdraw to deserted places and pray.⁴

Then Jesus withdrew from them about a stone's throw, knelt down and prayed.⁵

Jesus prayed.

Jesus frequently prayed before the big moments in his ministry, such as when he was about to name the twelve apostles. In today's reading, Jesus was preparing for his execution.

¹ Luke 6:12.

² Matthew 14:23.

³ Luke 3:21.

⁴ Luke 5:16.

⁵ Luke 22:41.

We often don't know the content of Jesus' prayers, because he withdrew to pray by himself. But in today's reading he was actually praying in the presence of his disciples. All of John, chapter 17, contains the highlights of Jesus' prayer. The extraordinary thing about this long and complex prayer is that Jesus was not praying for himself. Even though he was facing torture and death, Jesus was praying first for the disciples who were with him and then for the future disciples who would come to believe through the first ones.

He prayed that God the Father would prove Jesus' identity by glorifying him in front of the disciples. The effect of this would be to spiritually strengthen the disciples and to unify them in the new faith. The experience of witnessing the glorification of the Christ would enable the disciples to proclaim the Christian faith to the next generation of believers. Unity of faith would empower the disciples to build the Church and to grow in both grace and numbers.

Rather than pray for himself in his final hours, Jesus prayed for the disciples so that they might be able to be the Church that lives and proclaims the Christian faith.

We are that same Church. We are the disciples for whom Jesus prayed. We are to so experience the glory of Christ that we are empowered to live and proclaim the gospel. We are the ones who are to ensure the future of the Church and the health of our own proclamation.

Let's start this with our own prayers. Let's first ask God to glorify Jesus in our midst, in ways that will encourage our proclamation. *[You may use the prayer below or insert your own or pray extemporaneously.]*

Come, Holy Spirit, come. Glorify Jesus the Christ in our midst. Transform our parish into the fulfillment of Jesus' own prayers, so that we might proclaim him as the risen Christ. We beg you for a miracle that reveals Christ's glory and identity in our parish. Empower us to be the Church for which Jesus prayed. We beg this of you, our only God and Creator. AMEN.

Then, let's pray that God would grant us the courage of Jesus so that we might make our proclamation in word and deed in the sight of more and more people. *[You may use the prayer below or insert your own or pray extemporaneously.]*

Lord Jesus Christ, you proved your courage in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the hill of Calvary. Fill each of us to overflowing with that courage, that we may be the Church for which you prayed. Encourage us to proclaim your salvation in both our words and our actions. Empower us to live as reflections of your love and grace. We ask this of you, our Lord and our Saviour. Amen.

Now, we have to turn those prayers into actions by being trained to effectively proclaim the gospel to others. I don't think we have the background required for this, so we'll have to turn to the bishop for guidance and input. So it's up to the People's Warden to be in contact with the bishop to explain our need. Do we agree here this morning that the People's Warden should reach out to the bishop? *[Wait. Encourage the expression of the consensus.]*

With a straw vote of "YES", contact the bishop for guidance and input

So, Name of People's Warden, perhaps by the end of this week, you could send the bishop an email explaining our situation and directing the bishop to the diocesan website, where this sermon has been posted. The end result is that we need some kind of training in personal proclamation so that we might be the fulfillment of Jesus' own prayer.

With a straw vote of "NO", do not contact the bishop for guidance and input. If no consensus was developed, treat this result as if it were a "NO".

So, we'll have to find another means of turning Jesus' prayers into meaningful action. I suggest that the Vestry turn this into a topic for discussion and action at their next meeting.

Jesus prayed for himself and for his disciples. We are those disciples. We are the subjects of his prayers. We are to so experience his glory that we become unified in our proclamation of the gospel. The end result of this proclamation is

the growth of the Church in both grace and numbers. After all, that's what it means to be the Church. That's what it means to be Christ's disciples. That's what it means for Jesus to be our way, our truth and our life.

AMEN.