

SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER



Unity

Lord,
you gather your community
of believers that they may be one.
While we do not seek
division or desire to be apart
from you or your people,
it is easy for us to find
ourselves separated and alone,
because of our words or actions.
As we walk through this week,
allow us to remove
the garment of isolation
and independence
that hinders the harmony
of our living in community as
your people.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Sunday, June 2, 2019
So That They May All Be One

Today's Readings: Acts 7:55–60; Psalm 97:1–2, 6–7, 9; Revelation 22:12–14, 16–17, 20; John 17:20–26. Stephen, the first martyr, was among the group of deacons ordained in the Acts of the Apostles. He was filled with the Holy Spirit, but his words were considered blasphemy, a sacrilege to the Sanhedrin. They used stones to silence him, but he called out loudly to his Lord, to receive his spirit and to forgive his persecutors. Both of those phrases echoed Jesus' words on the Cross.

After Stephen's prayer of forgiveness in the First Reading, we hear Jesus pray for unity in the Gospel. During the final portion of the Last Supper discourse, Jesus

expresses the love and care he has for his followers. This prayer that all believers "may be one" is as much a prayer for Christians today as it was for the first disciples. Jesus desires for all of us to be with him and to be one with the Father. Jesus wants all to live in the joy of the Kingdom. He wants the world to know that his Spirit will inspire and move them to accomplish wonders that will give glory to the Father. How can you more intentionally live in harmony with those with whom you disagree? Are you willing to carve out time in quiet to listen to the Spirit? In following the Spirit, Christians learn how to witness to God's glory.



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, June 3 Courage and Peace

The disciples assure Jesus that they know everything about him and believe he came from God. However, Jesus tells them that they will scatter, leaving him alone in his suffering. In this moment, as he speaks of their abandonment, he comforts them with words of peace and courage. In what area of your life is it difficult to afford the courage to proclaim Jesus as Lord? *Today's Readings: Acts 19:1–8; Psalm 68:2–3, 4–5, 6–7; John 16:29–33.*

Tuesday, June 4 The Glory of God

Jesus' prayer for his disciples is also a prayer for Christians today. Spend some time in prayer today, asking Christ to bless all those followers who have shared and continue to share the Good News of faith with you. Ask Christ to hold close all those who have wandered away and do not feel as though they belong to him. May we be united for the glory of God. *Today's Readings: Acts 20:17–27; Psalm 68:10–11, 20–21; John 17:1–11.*

Wednesday, June 5 Keep Watch over the Flock

The Acts of the Apostles offers a beautiful image of Paul among the elders of the church of Ephesus. After he addresses them, he kneels down and prays with them. They are so moved by his words and the realization that they will not see him again, they begin to weep without restraint and throw their arms around him and kiss him. May our love of God and neighbor move us so that there is no doubt about the work of the Spirit in our heart. *Today's Readings: Acts 20:28–38; Psalm 68:29–30, 33, 35, 35–36; John 17:11–19.*

Thursday, June 6 Hidden Gifts

While praying, Jesus thanks the Father for the gift of his followers. Imagine Jesus' gratitude for human beings who are messy, weak, and flawed. Jesus responds to this gift with a wish that believers be with Jesus and see his glory. Considering that all are a gift to the Son, reflect on the sacredness within each person. *Today's Readings: Acts 22:30; 23:6–11; Psalm 16:1–2, 5, 7–8, 9–10, 11; John 17:20–26.*

Friday, June 7 Ancient Cultures

Ancient cultures often speak of both living well and dying well. It is unusual today to hear people look forward to dying, but what if we knew our final act would give glory to God? That is what Jesus promises Peter regarding his death. Would such knowledge transform the way you live? Have you considered how every moment of our lives, our faith, and our love of the Lord give glory to God? *Today's Readings: Acts 25:13–21; Psalm 103:1–2, 11–12, 19–20; John 21:15–19.*

Saturday, June 8 One Book

Have you ever been so captivated by an experience that time seems to have been suspended? The closing verse of the Gospel hints at this very nature of Jesus Christ. John writes that this book of the Bible is his testimony to the life of Christ. He could have written more but the information about Jesus is more than the books that could be written. More important than words is the relationship that is formed with Christ. Take to heart John's words to grow in love with Christ. *Today's Readings: Acts 28:16–20, 30–31; Psalm 11:4, 5, 7; John 21:20–25.*

