

Sunday, May 17, 2026 – Seventh Sunday of Easter

First Reading: Acts 1:6-14

8-9 - You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.

12-14 - Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey away. When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

What did the early disciples need – and what do we need – in order to be able to face and deal with the challenges of life and in order to remain faithful followers of Jesus?

Verse 8 – The power of the Holy Spirit

Verse 8 – The power of a clear direction and a clear sense of mission

Verse 14 – The power of prayer

Verse 14 – The power of unity and Christian fellowship

I believe this is the last time in the Bible that Mary, the mother of our Lord, is mentioned. How happy she must have been when Jesus' brothers James and Jude became believers.

Second Reading: 1 Peter 5:6-14

6-8 - Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. Discipline yourselves and keep alert.

How are you doing at humbling yourself under the mighty hand of God?

How is God exalting you? Cf. song "You Raise Me Up"

How are you doing at casting all your anxiety on God?

What anxious concern are you having an especially difficult time releasing to God?

How are you doing at disciplining yourself and keeping alert?

Where is your life well disciplined? Where do you lack discipline?

8-9 - Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour. Resist him. Be steadfast in your faith.

What do you think of the image of the devil as being like a roaring lion?

Are you sufficiently aware of the fact that the devil is your enemy and he wants to destroy you?

9 - Your brothers and sisters in all the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering.

How aware are you of the suffering of other Christians around the world?

See the website for Voice of the Martyrs - [The Voice of the Martyrs \(persecution.com\)](http://persecution.com)

10 - And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you.

When have you experienced God's restoring, supporting, strengthening, and establishing you after a time of suffering and/or after a particularly difficult time?

Cf. Mark 1: 13 – He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan. He was with the wild beasts, and the angels waited on (ministered to) Him.

12-13 - Through Silvanus I have written this short letter to encourage you and to testify that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it. Your sister church in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you greetings, and so does my son Mark.

Gospel: John 17

John 17 contains what is often called Jesus' High Priestly Prayer.

It is the longest recorded prayer of Jesus in the Bible.

It is remarkable whom and what Jesus prayed for and about after the Last Supper while He was on His way to the Garden of Gethsemane.

1 - Father, the hour has come. (*Cf. John 13: 1 – Jesus knew that His hour had come.*)

3 - This is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

4 – I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do.

5 - So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.

11 - I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.

14 – The world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. *Cf. 1 Peter - exiles and aliens – exiles in the Dispersion*

15 – I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one.

20 – I ask not only on behalf of these, but on behalf of those who will believe in Me through their word.

On the night of His betrayal – on His way to the Garden of Gethsemane – Jesus was praying for you.

Lake Avenue Congregational Church in Pasadena, California – The Three Commitments of a Christian

1. Commitment to Christ

21 – As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us.

2. Commitment to the Church, the Body of Christ

22 – So that they may be one, as we are one.

23 – I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me.

3. Commitment to Ministry, the Work of Christ in the World

18 – As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.