

Sunday 16th May 2021

# Seventh Sunday of Easter (Sunday after Ascension Day)

Alleluia! Christ is risen!  
He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Today's Gospel reading: John 17:6-19

This reading isn't the easiest to follow or to understand, but is, nevertheless, very important and we can see why this Seventh Sunday in the Easter season is kept as "Ministry and Calling Sunday". We hear Jesus praying to God for his friends. This happens after the Easter story but while Jesus is still on earth. He is praying for his disciples, who, following his Ascension, will become his body on earth. If you are joining our Eucharist online, you will hear the Gospel read from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, but here is a paraphrased version of Jesus's prayer to his Father:

'I have taught the people here about you. They were following your laws and you asked me to teach them more and they have obeyed your word. Now they know that everything I can do is because of you. They knew for certain that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. I pray for them. I am not praying for the whole world but for my friends. I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name. While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by the power you gave me.'

'I am coming up to heaven now, but I want to say these things whilst I am on the Earth, so that they can be filled with joy. I have given them your word and the world has hated them. Do not take them out of the world but protect them from the evil one. They are not of this world now, even as I am not of it. Bless them by your truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.'

(from [birminghamcitadel.co.uk](http://birminghamcitadel.co.uk))

🧐 Jesus is asking God to protect his friends, as they have the hard job of going out and telling more people about God, now that Jesus is going back to heaven. Jesus's Ascension, which we celebrated on Thursday, shows us a portal between the eternal dimension and the earthly dimension. So close and so thinly veiled, the heavenly realm receives our Lord and his disciples are left, for now, here in the earthly realm. Their task, here on earth, is to be Jesus's body and he prays for their protection.

We can learn from this that, as disciples of Jesus, God cares about us and he will protect us from evil. God will bless us when we are doing his work of telling people about him and caring for others – being his body on earth.

St Theresa of Avila, a Spanish Carmelite nun, who lived in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, wrote this about us being Christ's body in the world:

Christ has no body but yours.  
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,  
Yours are the eyes with which he looks  
Compassion on this world.  
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,  
Yours are the hands with which he blesses all the world.  
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,  
Yours are the eyes, you are his body.  
Christ has no body now but yours,  
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,  
Yours are the eyes with which he looks  
Compassion on this world.  
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

Being Jesus's body in the world is big work! How were Jesus's disciples going to cope once he had gone? How can we manage to be Jesus's body?

Before his Ascension, Jesus promised his disciples that they would receive power from on high to enable them to do his work and be his body in the world. This week we, too, pray that we might receive the power of the Holy Spirit, as we look forward to Pentecost next Sunday. We, like the first disciples, need the help of the Holy Spirit to live as Christians and to be the light of our communities, telling others about Jesus. We pray, as well, on this Ministry and Calling Sunday, for all those who are feeling a calling to ministry of any kind in Christ's Church, as they explore their vocation.

🙏 As we pray, between Ascension Day and Pentecost, for the coming of God's Holy Spirit, you might be interested in having a look at the website "[thykingdomcome.global](http://thykingdomcome.global)" for prayers and information about a worldwide wave of prayer over this 10 days.

🙏 A prayer for this week, which we can say anywhere, anytime  
– and over and over again!

**"Come, Holy Spirit. Let your kingdom come".**

Have a good week!

Some colourings and a puzzle:

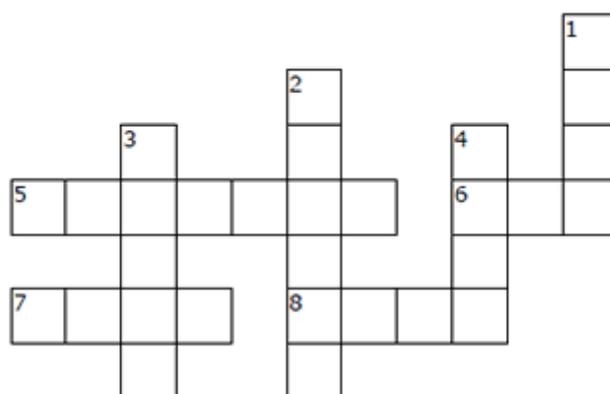


# Jesus Prays for His Disciples



I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours.  
John 17:9 (NIV)

This puzzle is based on John 17:6-11 (NIV)



## ACROSS

5. To keep from being injured or harmed
6. To be a single unit, object, or living being
7. A combination of letters that represents a thought or idea
8. To speak to God

## DOWN

1. To place in the hands of someone
2. To receive something
3. That which belongs to you
4. Deserving special respect or reverence; worthy of worship

PRAY	GIVE	HOLY	PROTECT
ACCEPT	YOURS	WORD	ONE

Sanctify them  
by the truth;  
Your word is  
truth. John 17:17