

## Thursday 28 May

Today is Thursday the 28 May, in the 7th week of Easter.

Jodi Penner sings Be Near Me Still. Begin to notice the presence of God around you now as you come before the Lord in prayer.

Today's reading is from the Gospel of John.

'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 in 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 as you have loved me. Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which 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 to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.' John 17:20-26

In this prayer Jesus prays above all for unity among his disciples as the most effective sign of witness. Earlier on Jesus had told his friends, "By this will all know that you are my disciples, that you have love for one another."

In the past weeks and months of the pandemic, there have been many examples of heroic love and service for which we can thank the Lord. Yet sometimes we can feel lonely and deserted, just as the disciples must have felt. All that is around us may seem to say that we are alone, that your death was your end, that you changed nothing. Yet you pray for us to the Father. You show that you do care about our loneliness and sense of isolation. You want to involve us in the close, loving relationship you have with your Father.

Jesus prays that we may have the same unity among ourselves and with Jesus as that which binds Jesus and the Father. It is through the love that we show for each other that we give the most effective witness to the message of Christ. The Lord prays: "May they be so completely one that the world may know that you have sent me." Can you think of recent examples of people showing such love and care for others? As you listen to the reading again, what is it that the Lord wants for you?

As this time of prayer comes to a close, help us to be open to the love and companionship you offer. In letting your love work in us, help us to come to know the Father, and so be better able to understand and love others.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.