



Seventh Sunday of Easter Reflection 29th May 2022
Acts 7: 55-60. - Apocalypse 22: 12 – 14, 16 – 17, 20. - John 17: 2- - 26.
“I will not leave you orphans”

Today's readings are about people's bearing heroic witness to Jesus through life and death, and the Source of the inspiration behind such witness-bearing. They urge us to work for greater unity and to consider the power of Christian witness. The first reading describes the martyrdom of Stephen the Deacon and how he bore witness to his Faith and the forgiving love of Jesus by his last prayers. In today's Responsorial Psalm (Ps 97) the Psalmist prays that all creation may rejoice in the Lord who is King, and that all peoples may see His Glory. In the second reading, taken from the Book of Revelation, Jesus, the Alpha and the Omega, is pictured as having all the forces of Heaven and earth at his disposal, standing ready to help us in our Christian witness-bearing. It is relatively easy to acknowledge our oneness with Stephen, and to long for the experience of eternal oneness with "all those who have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb". But to remain truly one with all of our brothers and sisters continues to be a daily challenge. Today's Gospel is the last part of the "priestly prayer" of Jesus after the Last Supper. This chapter of John has been called "The Testament of Jesus" or "Jesus' High Priestly (or Intercessory) Prayer." During that long prayer, Jesus prays first for himself – for his own glorification (v1-5) – as he faces the cross. Then, he prays for his disciples that they may be unified and protected in the face of opposition from the world (v6-19), and finally he prays for those in distant lands and far-off ages, including ourselves, who will enter the Christian Faith because of their witness-bearing. Thus, this is Jesus' prayer for each one of us. We have complete Faith and certainty because Jesus put his confidence in God to whom he entrusts us all.

Life Messages:

- 1) We need to pray for unity and serve one another in unity. We must pray for unity and discuss the similarities we share with others as well as our differences. Along with prayer, we must put our words into action. This means that we are to serve one another and to love one another as brothers and sisters in the Lord. What unites us is greater than what divides us. As we move nearer to Jesus Christ, in him we move nearer to one another. Such unity is ultimately a gift of the Holy Spirit and of His guidance. The soul of the ecumenical movement then, is spiritual. Only by a renewal of the spiritual, by common prayer and common listening to the Word of God, can we hope to overcome the present ecumenical impasses and difficulties. In the words of Pope St. John Paul II: "The door to ecumenism is opened only on our knees."
- 2) We need to have a clear idea about the Catholic stand on ecumenism. In his encyclical *Ut Unum Sint*, Pope St. John Paul II warns against compromise for the sake of unity. He states, "the ultimate goal of the ecumenical movement is to re-establish full visible unity among all the baptised [77.1]." He adds, "It is already possible to identify the areas in need of fuller study before a true consensus of Faith can be achieved."