

May 19, 2026 - Tuesday of the 7th week of Easter

[Acts 20:17-27; Jn 17:1-11a](#)

Homily

Starting today and for the next two days, we will read, as the Gospel reading, Jesus' long prayer to His Father at the end of the last Passover meal he shared with His disciples. This prayer, often called Jesus' 'sacerdotal prayer', forms the entire chapter 17 of John's Gospel. It is followed in chapter 18 by the arrest of Jesus, which introduces the account of His Passion.

Similarly, in the first reading today and tomorrow, we read the account of Paul's meeting in Miletus with the elders of the Church of Ephesus, to whom he announces that he is leaving for Jerusalem, where he will have to suffer. And Thursday's reading will describe his arrest in Jerusalem.

In his Letter, which we read last Sunday, Saint Peter reminds the first Christians that if they suffer because they are Christians, they should rejoice, and this for two reasons. Firstly, because in this way they share in the sufferings of Christ and, secondly, because it will earn them joy and gladness on the day when the glory of Christ is revealed.

The Acts of the Martyrs of the Early Church give us many examples of men and women who joyfully went to their deaths out of fidelity to Christ. Where did they find their strength and courage? They drew this courage and strength from their faith in Christ, of course, but also from a faith shared in the Church.

It was their belonging to a community of believers that gave strength to their faith. And this community of believers found its unity and cohesion in prayer. The text of the Acts of the Apostles shows us the early community praying with the Apostles and around Mary. Is this not the most essential dimension of the Church?

Jesus' Gospel message is addressed to all men and women of all times. It is to each one in particular that Jesus will say at the Last Judgment: *'I was hungry and you gave me food... or you did not give me food. I was in prison and you visited me... or you did not visit me.'* This is a personal obligation for each one of us. The Church as such—the Church as the visible sacrament of salvation—also has another mission: to be the visible (sacramental) manifestation of salvation under the sign of a visible communion in faith, charity and hope. And this visible communion is first and foremost a communion in prayer. It

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is no coincidence that the first Christian community in Jerusalem is shown to us in the Acts of the Apostles as a community in prayer, gathered around Mary, the Mother of Jesus, even before it was a community of sharing and a missionary community proclaiming the Good News.

Where did the first Christians learn to pray? -- From the example of Jesus Himself. Throughout His ministry, He had been very discreet about His personal relationship with His Father. However, as His death approached, He wanted to bring His closest disciples into the mystery of this prayer. He took Peter, James and John to the Mount of Transfiguration and to the Garden of Gethsemane. Above all, He opened His heart and His prayer to His disciples during the Last Supper, praying aloud to His Father in front of them.

For His hour had come. That hour had not yet come when Mary laid her Son in a manger, symbolically giving Him to us as food, because there was no room in the 'upper room' (and not in the 'inn' as is often mistakenly translated). That hour had not yet come at the wedding in Cana, nor whenever the leaders of the people wanted to seize Him. Now that hour has come.

It is the hour of His glorification, the hour of His triumph over death by passing through death. It is also the hour of the Spirit, whom He will send down upon His Church on the Day of Pentecost. Let us prepare ourselves during the coming week to receive this Spirit in fullness.

Let us ask Him to transform us into a truly fervent community of prayer, where we will all draw the strength to be authentic witnesses of Christ, each in our own environment, and, if necessary, not only to suffer in His name, but to find our joy in this suffering, which is only a pledge of the eternal joy that is promised and reserved for us.

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