

Seventh Sunday of Easter, May 13, 2018

Acts 1:15-17, 21-26; Psalm 1; 1 John 5:9-13; John 17:6-19

I propose to show that as children of God in Jesus the Christ, we are called to be in the world, but not of the world, so that we may reveal the love of God found in Christ Jesus by reflecting and sharing the love we have received.

I wish all mothers a Happy Mothers' Day.

Today's gospel lesson from John is part of a section known as Jesus' priestly prayer. In John's narrative it is prayed as part of the Last Supper. But in the liturgical season, this being the Sunday after the Ascension, it almost serves as if Jesus were already with his Father. This prayer is a bit difficult to understand, so I would like to highlight three major points.

First, Jesus is praying that his disciples will be united even as he and the Father are united. They are one in love and mission. He has shared with his disciples all that he has known of the Father both in word and in deed.

Second, Jesus prayed that although the disciples will be in the world, they are not to be of the world, and need to be protected from the evil one. Unlike Jesus, the evil one lives for the self, is concerned about self-interest, and not the common good. Jesus is not praying that the disciples not be subject to resistance or suffering, but that they remain true to God's Word as revealed in Jesus the Christ.

And finally, Jesus prayed that just as he was sent into the world for the sake of the world, so too would his disciples be sent into the world for the sake of sharing God's love found in Jesus with the world.

As part of my sermon preparation, I thought it would be helpful to know the origins of Mother's Day. So I did a quick search and found in Wikipedia some history which I found to be very helpful and changed my understanding of Mothers' Day.

Do you know the origins of Mothers' Day? It was founded by Anna Marie Jarvis in honor of her mother, Ann Reeves Jarvis. In 1832 Ann was born. She was the daughter of the Rev. Josiah W. Reeves, a Methodist Minister. She married Granville Jarvis, the son of a Baptist Minister, at the age of seventeen. They had eleven children born to her, with only four surviving to adulthood. Her children died of diseases such as measles, diphtheria and typhoid fever.

Ann was a social activist. In 1858 she founded the Mothers Day Work Clubs to improve public health with the help of her brother, Dr. James Edmund Reeves and Dr. Amos Payne. She felt compelled to make a difference and improve the health of the community.

In 1861 in Grafton, West Virginia, the Confederate Army led by General Robert E. Lee and the Union Army led by General George McClellan were fighting over Grafton, West Virginia. Of course, there would be casualties on both sides. However, as the Mothers Day Work Clubs included women from both Union and Confederate sides of the conflict, Ann was known to have said to the women,

"To make a sworn-to agreement between members that friendship and good will should obtain in the clubs for the duration and aftermath of the war. That all efforts to divide the churches and lodges should not only be frowned upon but prevented."

She urged the Mothers' Day Work Clubs to remain neutral and to provide aid to both sides. She opposed the split of the Methodist Episcopal Church into North and South. She sought to bring unity to help all who were ill of typhoid fever, both Union and Confederate soldiers.

In her church she was a Sunday School teacher who taught the basics of education and the faith to many children. It was for these reasons her daughter sought to establish a "Mothers Day" which was first celebrated at Andrews Methodist Episcopal Church in Grafton, West Virginia on May 10, 1908 three years after Ann Reeves Jarvis died on May 9, 1905.

She is known to have said:

I hope and pray that someone, sometime, will found a memorial mothers day commemorating her for the matchless service she renders to humanity in every field of life. She is entitled to it.

— *Ann Reeves Jarvis*^[6]

Anna was inspired by the example of her mother and all the other women who worked for a better world and so she sought to have a celebration of Mothers' Day in their honor.

However, when I think of Mothers' Day, I usually think about the many ways my mother, and all mothers have loved and cared for their children. But learning about Ann Reeves Jarvis and how Anna Marie Jarvis wanted to honor all mothers for the ways they render service to humanity has made me rethink about the way mothers and women work in general.

If we consider Ann Reeve Jarvis and her service, she did this before Women's Suffrage and during a time when women were not treated equally. She did not let her status determine what she could do. Although she lived in a time of great division, she sought to unite. She brought people together. In her own way, she fulfilled Jesus' prayer of being sent out into the world to serve all people affected by illness or war. The love and care offered was for anyone who needed it. She refused to choose sides. She and the Mothers Day Work Clubs offered loving service.

Her example made me reflect on the efforts of Brenda Joe-Matsuo and my wife, the Rev. Karen Swanson this weekend. A few months ago, Brenda came into my office and suggested that we have a parking lot sale to raise funds for the Youth Mission Trip. Initially, I thought it would be easier and better to just ask people to make additional donations.

And then Karen suggested that we have a Mothers' Day breakfast. And I told her it wasn't part of the culture of St. Ambrose, as many families have their own mother's day gatherings with their families, but to go and give it a try.

Both Brenda and Karen got to work inviting others to help them in their vision. So on Friday donations for the parking lot sale were brought in and organized to be sold. Many people volunteered to help. Friends of members donated items. On Saturday, neighbors came to get deals and buy things. Conversations happened. And much more happened than raising funds for

the youth mission trip; people were connecting to one another, and felt that no matter how small or large their contribution, they were part of a community.

On Saturday, preparations for the Mothers' Day breakfast were going on. Volunteers were making decorations for the tables, setting the tables and preparing the food for the next day. People, who may not have worked together, got to know one another for a common purpose. On Sunday during the breakfast people had an opportunity to give thanks for mothers in different circumstances.

Mothers' Day is really about how women work together for purposes greater than themselves by bringing others to a common purpose as did Ann Reeves Jarvis. I must confess that I am often apt to go it alone in a focused way, and miss the opportunity and joy of seeing how a group of like-minded people if given a vision can create a community of care that will bless others.

So on this Mothers' Day, I give thanks for Ann Reeves Jarvis, Anna Jarvis and all the mothers and women who in their way have worked together for the good of all. I believe Ann Reeves Jarvis was motivated by her faith in God through Jesus the Christ and exemplified the unity of God's love for all, and was willing to out beyond the confines of her home to serve.

May we all in our own ways do the same with God's help.

Amen.

P.S. The white carnation symbolized Anna Jarvis's celebration of Mothers' Day.

Although the national proclamation represented a public validation of her efforts, Jarvis always believed herself to be the leader of the commemorative day and therefore maintained her established belief in the sentimental significance of the day to honor all mothers and motherhood. Jarvis valued the symbolism of such tangible items as the white carnation emblem, which she described as:

Its whiteness is to symbolize the truth, purity and broad-charity of mother love; its fragrance, her memory, and her prayers. The carnation does not drop its petals, but hugs them to its heart as it dies, and so, too, mothers hug their children to their hearts, their mother love never dying. When I selected this flower, I was remembering my mother's bed of white pinks.

— *Anna Jarvis*

(Page 82 of *Memorializing Motherhood: Anna Jarvis and the Struggle for Control of Mother's Day*.)

Anatolini, Katherine Lane (2009). [Memorializing Motherhood: Anna Jarvis and the Struggle for Control of Mother's Day](#) (PhD Diss). West Virginia University. ISBN 978-1-124-17972-8. OCLC 610042090.

The Collect

O God, the King of glory, you have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven: Do not leave us comfortless, but send us your Holy Spirit to strengthen us, and exalt us to that place where our Savior Christ has gone before; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, in glory everlasting. *Amen.*

The First Lesson

Acts 1:15-17, 21-26

In those days Peter stood up among the believers (together the crowd numbered about one hundred twenty persons) and said, "Friends, the scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit through David foretold concerning Judas, who became a guide for those who arrested Jesus-- for he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry. So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us-- one of these must become a witness with us to his resurrection." So they proposed two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also known as Justus, and Matthias. Then they prayed and said, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which one of these two you have chosen to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place." And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles.

The Response

Psalm 1

Beatus vir qui non abiit

- 1 Happy are they who have not walked in the counsel of the wicked, *
nor lingered in the way of sinners,
nor sat in the seats of the scornful!
- 2 Their delight is in the law of the LORD, *
and they meditate on his law day and night.
- 3 They are like trees planted by streams of water,
bearing fruit in due season, with leaves that do not wither; *
everything they do shall prosper.
- 4 It is not so with the wicked; *
they are like chaff which the wind blows away.
- 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand upright when judgment comes, *
nor the sinner in the council of the righteous.
- 6 For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, *
but the way of the wicked is doomed.

The Epistle

1 John 5:9-13

If we receive human testimony, the testimony of God is greater; for this is the testimony of God that he has testified to his Son. Those who believe in the Son of God have the testimony in their hearts. Those who do not believe in God have made him a liar by not believing in the testimony that God has given concerning his Son. And this is the testimony: God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

The Gospel

John 17:6-19

Jesus prayed for his disciples, “I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them in your name that you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost, so that the scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves. I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one. They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.”

In preparation for this coming Sunday’s worship, please pray this coming Sunday’s Collect of the Day and read and reflect on the lessons assigned as printed below

The Day of Pentecost, May 20, 2018,

Acts 2:1-21; Psalm 104:25-35, 37; Romans 8:22-27; John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15

The Collect

Almighty God, on this day you opened the way of eternal life to every race and nation by the promised gift of your Holy Spirit: Shed abroad this gift throughout the world by the preaching of the Gospel, that it may reach to the ends of the earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

The First Lesson

Acts 2:1-21

When the day of Pentecost had come, the disciples were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house

where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs-- in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power." All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" But others sneered and said, "They are filled with new wine."

But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, "Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

 `In the last days it will be, God declares,
 that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,
 and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
 and your young men shall see visions,
 and your old men shall dream dreams.
 Even upon my slaves, both men and women,
 in those days I will pour out my Spirit;
 and they shall prophesy.
 And I will show portents in the heaven above
 and signs on the earth below,
 blood, and fire, and smoky mist.
 The sun shall be turned to darkness
 and the moon to blood,
 before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day.
 Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.' "

The Response

Psalm 104:25-35, 37

Benedic, anima mea

25 O LORD, how manifold are your works! *
 in wisdom you have made them all;
 the earth is full of your creatures.

26 Yonder is the great and wide sea
 with its living things too many to number, *
 creatures both small and great.

- 27 There move the ships,
and there is that Leviathan, *
which you have made for the sport of it.
- 28 All of them look to you *
to give them their food in due season.
- 29 You give it to them; they gather it; *
you open your hand, and they are filled with good things.
- 30 You hide your face, and they are terrified; *
you take away their breath,
and they die and return to their dust.
- 31 You send forth your Spirit, and they are created; *
and so you renew the face of the earth.
- 32 May the glory of the LORD endure for ever; *
may the LORD rejoice in all his works.
- 33 He looks at the earth and it trembles; *
he touches the mountains and they smoke.
- 34 I will sing to the LORD as long as I live; *
I will praise my God while I have my being.
- 35 May these words of mine please him; *
I will rejoice in the LORD.
- 37 Bless the LORD, O my soul. *
Hallelujah!

The New Testament

Romans 8:22-27

We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

The Gospel

John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15

Jesus said to his disciples, "When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf. You also are to testify because you have been with me from the beginning.

“I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. But now I am going to him who sent me; yet none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your hearts. Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will prove the world wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: about sin, because they do not believe in me; about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will see me no longer; about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been condemned.

“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.