

Thursday 7th of Easter

Gospel text (Jn 17,20-26): Jesus said, «I pray not only for these but also for those who through their word will believe in me. May they all be one as you Father are in me and I am in you. May they be one in us; so the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the Glory you have given me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. Thus they shall reach perfection in unity and the world shall know that you have sent me and that I have loved them just as you loved me.

»Father, since you have given them to me, I want them to be with me where I am and see the Glory you gave me, for you loved me before the foundation of the world. Righteous Father, the world has not known you but I have known you, and these have known that you have sent me. As I revealed your Name to them, so will I continue to reveal it, so that the love with which you loved me may be in them and I also may be in them».

«I pray not only for these but also for those who through their word will believe in me»

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Today, we find a solid basis for trust in the Gospel: «Holy Father, I pray not only for these but also for those who through their word will believe in me...» (Jn 17:20). It is Jesus' heart, which, in the intimacy of Jesus with his disciples, opens up the inexhaustible treasures of His Love. He wants to strengthen their hearts overwhelmed by the sense of farewell that, during the Last Supper, the Master's words and gestures have left them with. It is Jesus' unfailing prayer that goes up to the Father, pleading for them. What a confidence and strength will they find in this prayer throughout their apostolic mission! Amidst all the difficulties and dangers they have to face, this prayer will go all the way with them to become the source

where they will find the strength and courage to give the final testimony of their faith with the offering of their own life.

We should let the reality of Jesus' prayer for his disciples to reach our lives, too: «I pray not only for these but also for those who will believe in me...». These words travel through time and centuries to attain, with the same intensity they were once said, the hearts of every true believer.

In the living memory of His Holiness St. John Paul II's last visit to Spain, we find in his words the echo of Jesus' prayer for his disciples: «With my open arms, in my heart I carry you all —said the Pontiff before more than a million persons—. The memory of these days will become a prayer, we shall beg the peace for you in fraternal coexistence, encouraged by the Christian hope that never loses heart». Another Pontiff, not so close in time, also made an exhortation that, after many centuries, have reached our heart, too: «There is no ailing one whom the victory of the cross be denied to, nor there is anyone whom Christ's prayer does not help to. For, if it was so profitable for those who treated him so cruelly, how much more will it not be for those who are converted unto him» (St. Leo the Great).