

Today is Mother's Day and we give thanks to God for all mothers who show us something about the compassionate and loving nature of God. We celebrate this because human beings are made in the image and likeness of God and motherhood brings out some of the key characteristics of God. We are grateful to all the mothers who took part in today's service. Our theme for this morning is, "We are created to know God and abide in him."

On Thursday the 5th of May we celebrated Ascension Day. Forty days after the resurrection of Jesus and after numerous appearances to the disciple and others, Jesus ascended into the heavens where he was exalted and is seated at the right hand of the Father. It was necessary for Jesus to leave the disciples and go back to the Father because only then could he send the promised Holy Spirit to be with them. Next week we will celebrate the Feast of Pentecost when the gift of the Holy Spirit was given to all believers. This morning our theme reminds us that we are created to know God and abide in him. In the gospel reading that was read to us we see the high priestly prayer that Jesus prayed for his disciples. In this prayer Jesus speaks to the Father on behalf of the disciples who were with him and for those who would believe in him through the word and testimony of these disciples.

Two main themes are found in this prayer. In the first part Jesus prays that they may be united with him and remain in him. In the second section Jesus' desire is that the world may know God. Jesus begins his prayer addressing the Father, pleading for the unity of the immediate disciples and the would be disciples in the future. Jesus knows that he is going back to the Father and that his disciples were going to remain in the world and therefore his primary prayer is for their protection and particularly for their unity.

Jesus understands that the attack of the evil one among the followers of Christ would be one of disunity and division. Satan will be very happy as long as he can keep God's people fighting amongst themselves and forgetting their mission. Jesus wants the same unity that existed between his Father and himself to be the benchmark of unity amongst his disciples. He also prays that the disciples would remain in Christ just as the Father remains in Christ and Christ in the Father.

In our world today one of the biggest problems that we face amongst Christians is that of disunity and division. Christians have been fighting amongst themselves that they have not been able to focus on the mission that God has given us. Moreover, we need to remain in Christ not only to bear fruit but also to sustain ourselves. Only when we are grafted onto Christ will be able to draw our strength and sustenance from him. By our own strength we will run out of steam very soon and we will not be able to do anything. So Jesus challenges us to be united to each other and to remain in him so that we may bear much fruit in our lives.

In the second part of the prayer, Jesus expresses his desire that the world may know the Father and that those who know the Father through Christ would be with Christ and see his glory. Jesus says that the glory given to him has now been passed on to the disciples. The glory is given to human beings because of the presence of God in their lives when they put their faith in Christ. Jesus also prays for unity, "I in them and you in me that they may become completely one." This unity will enable the world to believe in Jesus Christ and also to believe that God loves Christ.

It is also Christ's desire that we may be with him in eternity. So even though we may not be praying for eternity, Christ is already praying that we will stand firm till the end, so that we may be with Christ in his Glory.

Finally, Jesus is the only one who can reveal God to us in totality because he is God in human flesh. All that God is, Jesus has made known by his life and witness and above all through the cross. The supreme self-sacrificial love is seen on the cross. As we celebrate Mother's Day we see this self-sacrificial love of mothers for their children and we give thanks for that. We too are called to exhibit this self-sacrificial love so that the world will see our love for one another and be drawn to Christ.