

HANDOUT: The Gospel of John chapter 17

Christ is the Mediator of a Greater Covenant:

#1. *“During his life on earth, he [Jesus] offered up prayer and entreaty, with loud cries and with tears, to the one who had the power to save him from death, and, winning a hearing by his reverence, he learnt obedience, Son though he was, through his sufferings; when he had been perfected, he became for all who obey him the source of eternal salvation and was acclaimed by God with the title of high priest of the order of Melchizedek.”* Hebrews 5:7-10

#2. *“As it is he [Jesus] has been given a ministry as far superior as is the covenant of which he is the mediator, which is founded on better promises. If that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no room for a second one to replace it. And in fact God does find fault with them; he says:*

*‘Look, the days are coming, Yahweh declares, when I shall make a new covenant with the House of Israel (and the House of Judah), but not like the covenant I made with their ancestors the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of Egypt, a covenant which they broke, and I too abandoned them, the Lord declares. No, this is the covenant I shall make with the House of Israel when those days have come, the Lord declares. In their minds I shall plant my Law, writing them on their hearts. Then I shall be their God and they will be my people. There will be no further need for each to teach neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Learn to know the Lord!’ No, they will all know me, from the least to the greatest since I shall forgive their guilt and never more call their sin to mind.’* [quoting Jeremiah 31:31-34]

*“By speaking of a new covenant, he implies that the first one is old. And anything old and aging is ready to disappear.”* Hebrews 8:6-13

#3. As the Last Supper draws to a close Jesus prays to God the Father on behalf of Himself and His disciples. This prayer can be divided into 3 parts:

- I. Verses 1-5: Jesus makes an offering of His approaching sacrifice to God the Father
- II. Verses 6-19: Jesus prays an intercessory prayer for the preservation of those who believe in Him.
- III. Verses 20-26: Jesus prays for all of us—believers down through the centuries—for the unity of the New Covenant Church.

**JESUS’ HIGH PRIESTLY PRAYER**

<b>I. FOR HIMSELF Verses 1-5</b>	<b>II. FOR HIS DISCIPLES Verses 6-19</b>	<b>III. FOR FUTURE BELIEVERS verses. 20-26</b>
He prays affirming the glory of the cross [vs. 1-2]	He prays for their knowledge [vs. 6-9]	He prays for their oneness in the Father and the Son [vs. 20-22]
He expresses the essence of eternal life [vs. 3-4]	He prays for their perseverance [vs. 10-12]	He prays for their perfect unity together [vs. 23]
He rejoices in the shared glory of the Father [vs. 5]	He prays for their joy [vs. 13]	He prays for their future presence with Him [vs. 24-25]
	He prays for their protection from evil [vs. 14-16]	He prays for their mutual love [vs. 26]
	He prays for their sanctification [vs. 14-17]	

#4. Catechism of the Catholic Church # 2750-51 *“By entering into the holy name of the Lord Jesus we can accept, from within, the prayer he teaches us: ‘Our Father!’ His priestly prayer fulfills, from within, the great petitions of the Lord’s Prayer: concern for the Father’s name; passionate zeal for his kingdom (glory); the accomplishment of the will of the Father, of his plan of salvation, and deliverance from evil. Finally in this prayer Jesus reveals and gives to us the ‘knowledge,’ inseparably one, of the Father and of the Son, which is the very mystery of the life of prayer.*

#5. The Navarre Commentary lists three dimensions to Jesus’ glorification [see page 206]:

1. **God the Father is glorified:** Jesus’ glorification promotes the glory of God the Father through Christ, who in obedience to God’s redemptive decree, makes the Father known and so brings God’s saving work to completion.
2. **God the Son is glorified:** Jesus’ divinity, which is disguised by His humanity, will at last be manifested through His human nature after the Resurrection and will be invested with the full power and authority of God over all creation.
3. **Man will be glorified:** Jesus’ glorification gives humanity the opportunity to receive God’s gift of eternal life, to enter into an intimate relationship with God the Father and God the Son and this in turn reflects the glorification of the Father and the Son while also inviting humanity’s participation in that divine glory.

#6. St. Cyril, the great Bishop of Jerusalem [born 315AD] and Doctor of the Church, wrote about the “catholic” nature of the Church: *“We call it catholic not only because it is spread throughout the world, from one extreme to the other, but because in a universal way and without defect it teaches all the dogmas which men ought to know, of both the visible and the invisible, the celestial and the earthly. Likewise because it draws to true worship all types of men, governors and citizens, the learned and the ignorant. And finally, because it cures and heals all kinds of sins, whether of the soul or of the body, possessing in addition—by whatever name it may be called—all the forms of virtue in deeds and in words and in every kind of spiritual life.”* *Catechesis, 18, 23* as quoted in the Navarre Bible Commentary, St John’s Gospel page 212.