

## 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter, Cycle A, May 21, 2017

Two young people, just recently graduated from school, are sitting in the waiting room of the personnel office of a large company. They are both applying for a full-time job, the first real job either of them has ever held. Both of them have submitted transcripts of their grades. Both of them have character references from teachers and community leaders. Both applicants look very good. But only one will land the job, the one who happens to know someone with influence in the company. That person can pull some strings. It's a cinch. That applicant will land the job.

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It helps to have a friend in high places, someone who will speak on your behalf. And that is exactly what we have in Jesus Christ. He ascended into heaven, where he sits at the right hand of God the Father, a very influential position. And there, he intercedes for us, and for all those who believe in him. He continues along the lines of the gospel passage that we just heard, to pray to God for this disciples.

At this particular moment in the gospel of John, Jesus has been speaking to his disciples. They are gathered together in the Upper Room, where they have just finished eating the Last Supper. Jesus has been saying good-bye to them, because he knows that he will die the next day on the cross and that he has begun the process of returning to God the Father. To conclude his words of farewell, Jesus offers up a prayer on behalf of his disciples.

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What are the things that we pray for? It seems as though we are always praying for the sick. There is always someone we know who is sick. It also seems as though we are always praying for peace, since there is always fighting going on in the world, for example, right now in the Middle East. We pray for our country, for wisdom for our leaders.

Those are all important things to pray for, and we should continue in asking God for them. However, they are not what Jesus Christ has in mind as he pray to God the Father for us.

Jesus Christ has something very specific in mind. He is praying to God the Father to send the Holy Spirit to his disciples. The Holy Spirit will guide the disciples and strengthen them as they continue Jesus' work. He will come down upon them at Pentecost and enable them to go out to all nations and teach them about Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is still interceding for us in heaven. He is asking God the Father to send the Holy Spirit upon us, to strengthen us as his disciples and to guide us with his wisdom, so that we can spread the gospel.

We have a friend in high places, Jesus Christ. He is speaking on our behalf, so that we might have a job, the job of continuing his work here on earth. Most importantly, Jesus Christ is speaking on our behalf, so that we might have the ability and strength to carry out that job, through the gift of his Holy Spirit.