

August 20, 2024

Daily Reflections



Center for Spiritual Development

GOD'S GIFT

By Elisabeth Beall

An Excerpt from Today's Gospel

*"I have given them the glory you gave me,
so that they may be one, as we are one,
I in them and you in me,
that they may be brought to perfection as one,
that the world may know that you sent me,
and that you loved them even as you loved me.
Father, they are your gift to me."*

JOHN 17:22-24

Reflection

My parents are at an age where, periodically, they like to talk about what I'll need to do after they've died. These are very practical, hands-on reminders – where I'll be able to locate various family valuables, where the important paperwork

is, what kind of music is desired at the funeral.

It's not fun lunchtime conversation, from my point of view, but even so, I have to admit that it's very sweet of them to worry about me, and how I will handle everything that needs handling on their behalf, after they're gone. They want to give me as much help as they can ... while they can!

That's what we do for the people we love. We worry about them. We try to take care of them. We work to set things up for their success. And that's just what Jesus is doing in this reading, a long petition to his Father to care for Jesus's followers. This chapter comes after several focusing on Jesus's last days – his entry into Jerusalem, his washing of the Apostles' feet, the Last Supper. In the next chapter, Jesus will be arrested and Peter will deny knowing him.

Jesus knows the end of his earthly life is near, and yet he is praying for the welfare of his friends, his disciples – current and future. He looks ahead to his life in the resurrection, praying that the people he loves will be there with him – and that they will at last see him in the fullness of his glory as the Son of God. “Father,” he says, “they are your gift to me.”

It's a remarkable thing for Jesus to say, since he is God's greatest gift to us – to all the world. That's an act of generosity we often reflect on – but there's another one we often brush aside. For just as we are a gift to Jesus and he is a gift to us, so are we all gifts to each other. Let us go into this day with that knowledge at the forefront of our minds, and treat each other as precious and remarkable gifts from -- and to -- our most generous Creator.



Boy Hugging His Mom
Photo by Anna Shvets

For Pondering

- Re-read the words: “Father, they are your gift to me.” How does it make you feel to know Jesus views you as a gift he has received? How does that impact the way you view yourself?
 - As Jesus and the Father are in one another, Jesus prays that we may also be in both of them. How would your outlook change if you not only believed that God was in you ... but that you were also in God? How would this impact the way you move through each day?
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For Prayer

*All-Powerful God,
I overflow with thanks that I am part of your creation.
I am humbled that you have given me as a gift to your Son.
I pray for the wisdom and grace always to see
My brothers and sisters through your eyes:
As a gift to you, and to me, and to the world.
Amen.*

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