

## Three Parts of Jesus' Prayer

### A. The Relationship of Father to Son (17:1-5)

After Jesus has revealed that his disciples will abandon him (16:32) the Prayer to the Father shows that his prophecy will not be a disaster.

In fact, paradoxically, it is a triumph because it will inaugurate the glorification of Father by Son **“I have glorified you on earth”**, and Son by Father **“ Now glorify me with that glory I had with you before the world began”**, the result of which will lead to the glorification of those who believe in the Son **“So that .. he my give eternal life to all those you have entrusted to him”**.



### B. The Relationship of the Son to the Disciples (17:6-19)

This section recognises that Jesus has manifested the name of the Father to his disciples (v.6-8) and he now prays for them to reveal his truth to the world (v.17) using the phrase **“Consecrate them in the truth”**. The word ‘consecrate’ (or sanctify) is not the same as ‘purify’ or make clean. Consecrate means to be specially prepared for a spiritual task, and Jesus consecrates himself also (v.19), that is unites himself with the Father, in order to ensure that his disciples are truly consecrated in the truth (v.19).

### C. The Relationship of the Disciples to Future Believers (17:20-26)

The special task the disciples were consecrated for was to teach others about Jesus and the Father, and Jesus also prays for them, his future community: **“I pray .. also for those who, through their teaching, will come to believe in me”** (v.20). Then the prayer reaches its climax in the revelation of what is in store for all who faithfully follow Jesus.- it is nothing less than a share in the unity and glory of the Father and Son **“May they all be one just as you, Father, are in me and I am in you .. I have given them the glory you have given me, that they may be one as we are one”** (v. 21-22). What a wonderful conclusion.



## Our Catholic Faith Prayer and Spirituality 2010-2011

### 23. Jesus' Prayer to the Father in St. John's Gospel



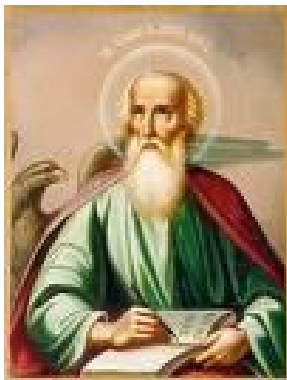
1. Does it matter to us if Jesus did not actually say his 'Prayer to the Father' in the way portrayed in St. John's Gospel?
2. Is it a plausible argument to say that St. John 'hid' the 'Our Father' within Jesus' 'Prayer to the Father'?
3. When Jesus asks that his disciples are 'consecrated in the truth' what do you think he meant by 'truth'?

## The Significance of Jesus' Prayer to His Father (Jn.17)

In previous talks about the Bible and the Gospels, it was emphasised that the nature of any biblical text needs to be evaluated before making any judgements about the particular content of any passage. It was also stressed that the Gospels were the product of a particular faith community, and they represented its **theological reflections**.

John's Gospel is the result of a mature reflection of **who Jesus really was**, and it sought to portray that reflection in the passages it recorded and the way it recorded them. This may mean that some of the passages may not have occurred in quite the way portrayed in the Gospel.

Remember, also, that it was within the literary conventions of the time for a writer to attribute particular words to someone even if they may not have been the precise words used, or even if the words may not have been all uttered at the same time, provided those words were an accurate representation of the views of the speaker.



When the Prayer of Jesus to His father is examined, it is important to see it in its particular context - it parallels the moment in the Passion story of the Synoptic Gospels when Jesus and his disciples left the Upper Room to go to Gethsemane and Jesus foretold that they would all desert him.

It seems reasonable, therefore, to suppose that the Prayer represents a theological reflection by John on the **significance of the desertion** of the disciples. This significance is threefold:

1. Jesus has not been deserted by His Father
2. The disciples are not permanently lost, but will return and actually carry out the work Jesus and the Father wants of them.
3. The disciples' work will ensure eternal life for all believers.

## A High-Priestly Prayer or Prayer of Consecration?

Sometimes the Prayer of Jesus is described liturgically as being **High-Priestly** or one of **Consecration**. This is because it represents the situation in the Upper Room where Jesus offered high-priestly prayer for his disciples and, of course, consecrated himself and his disciples in the context of his sacrificial offering. However, it must **not** be seen primarily in a **liturgical** setting **nor** even as a vehicle of **preaching**. Its great value is in the fact that **it is a prayer** first and foremost. In other words, its purpose is to show intimate communion with God the Father.



## The Prayer of the 'Our Father'

One further point must be made before outlining the three parts of Jesus' prayer. John's Gospel does not contain a specific account of the giving of the 'Our Father' to his disciples as does the synoptic Gospels. Yet, a careful examination of the 'Prayer to the Father' reveals **remarkable parallels** to the 'Our Father'. These indicate John wished to include the essential elements of the 'Our Father' within his own theological reflection:

1. **Our Father** (17:1, 5, 11, 21, 24, 25)
2. Hallowed be thy **name** (17:6, 11, 12, 26)
3. Thy **Kingdom** come // Glorify the Son (17:1, 5, 11, 23)
4. Thy Will be done **on earth** // You have given him power over all humanity (17:2) and, I have sent them into the world (17:18) and, those who through their teaching will come to believe (V.20)
5. Give us our daily **Bread** // So the love with which you love me may be in them and so I may be in them (17:26, also v.21)
6. **Forgive** us our trespasses // May they be perfected in unity (17:23) and, Father Upright One (v.25)
7. Lead us Not into **Temptation** // Keep those you have given me true to your name (17:11)
8. But deliver us from **evil** // Protect them from the evil one (17:15)