

The Sunday of the Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council

John 17:1-13

These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word., Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. (KJV)

Our conscience will tell us the condition of our heart, mind and soul in our relationship with God. Constant review and analysis of our relationship with God is necessary if we are to travel and remain on the narrow path to God's Kingdom.

The Lord Jesus Christ speaks about eternal life in the current Gospel. Eternal life is possible for believers embracing the way of Christ. Remaining true to Christ throughout life necessitates self-analysis and repentance.

The heart, mind and soul belong to Christ and are to be filled with Christ when seeking God's Kingdom and eternal life. The believer is responsible for monitoring the heart, mind and soul and rejecting the presence of sin.

The Lord is ever-present and within reach in the battle against personal sin and to facilitate repentance. The believer is not singularly able to be victorious over sin.

Victory over sin comes only with the help of the Lord Jesus Christ. Prayers to the Mother of God, the angels, saints. Prophets and martyrs strengthen and help the believer in the fight against personal sin.

Jesus' love for and interest in each person is evident in the present Gospel. The believer's love for and interest in Christ is manifested in the way daily life is lived.

Jesus will know by the way a person lives whether or not He is loved by the believer. Jesus has the ability to know the contents of the heart and mind and the condition of the soul.

The believer's motivations and deep interests are known to the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ is loving and forgiving when the believer honestly and sincerely repents and seeks newness and renewal in Christ.

Trust in Christ is necessary to sincerely repent. Trust in Christ is required to firmly and irrevocably reject sin. Trust in Christ enables the believer to embrace Christ's love, forgiveness and healing.

Peace for the heart, mind and soul are within reach of the person sincerely repenting. Jesus said: "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." (Mt. 9:13)

To repent, believers need to turn to the Lord Jesus Christ and away from sin. The present Gospel is instructional and reassuring in the path for eternal life. Jesus described eternal life in the current Gospel.

Jesus said: "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." (Jn 17:3) The opportunity to know the true God and Jesus Christ exists at every moment of life.

Every moment of life devoted to knowing the true God and Jesus Christ keeps sin away. Growth in Christ becomes possible and is realized when sin is kept away.

Love for Christ is demonstrated by the interest the person shows in Christ in thought, word and deed. The person's seriousness in prayer reflects love for Christ. The heart's welcoming of Christ shows love for Christ.

The mind blocking and rejecting sinful thoughts proves love for Christ. Christ's help is necessary in the battle against sin. Christ's love embraces the sinner taking the steps to repent.

God's Holy Church is where to learn to love God and the Lord Jesus Christ. God's Holy Church is where to experience the Holy Spirit. The Holy Trinity becomes known to believers in the Church.

The value of the soul and the path to God's Kingdom are taught in God's Holy Church. The way to eternal life becomes clear in the Church. Learning for life throughout life is possible in the Church.

Today's Gospel reaches into the heart, the mind and the soul of the attentive believer. God's interest is in the whole person for every moment of life. God's love for each person extends to life eternal.

The Sunday of the Fathers of the First Council. Venerable Michael the Confessor. May 23/June 5, 2022. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania.

Father Rodney Torbic