

Gospel

John 17:20–26

May they be completely one.

✠ A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and said:

‘Holy Father,

20 I pray not only for these, but for those also
who through their words will believe in me.

21 May they all be one.

Father, may they be one in us,

as you are in me and I am in you,

so that the world may believe it was you who sent me.

22 I have given them the glory you gave to me,
that they may be one as we are one.

23 With me in them and you in me,
may they be so completely one

that the world will realise that it was you who sent me
and that I have loved them as much as you loved me.

24 Father, I want those you have given me
to be with me where I am,

so that they may always see the glory

you have given me

because you loved me

before the foundation of the world.

25 Father, Righteous One,

the world has not known you, but I have known you,

and these have known that you have sent me.

26 I have made your name known to them

and will continue to make it known,

so that the love with which you loved me may be in them,

and so that I may be in them.’

The Gospel of the Lord.

Looking at the Text:

G-10 John 17:20-26 (long form) or 17:20-23 (short form)
May they be completely one.

The Gospel of St John

Central to the gospel of St John are a number of themes. Scholars divide the gospel into two 'books' — the first being 'the book of signs' all about Jesus' public ministry, i.e. the miracles or 'signs' he did, pointing not to himself but to God the Father, and the second, known as 'the book of Glory', showing us Jesus and his relationship with his disciples, from the Last Supper, through to his arrest, suffering, death and resurrection. It is in John's gospel that we find the emphasis on love and loving service, in Jesus' sayings, 'signs' and teaching: 'I give you a new commandment: that you love one another just as I have loved you.'

In this passage

Jesus is praying for his disciples and for all those who will believe in him down the centuries. It is a great prayer for unity in heart and mind, love and purpose, just as Jesus is completely united with the Father's heart and love and purpose. Jesus promises to give us, in our time and place, everything we need to live a united and faithful life in marriage. Our 'unity' will be a sign to all of the love of God, who from the beginning of time planned for Jesus to enter our history, becoming one of us, to make the love of God known. This great prayer of Jesus is full of mystery. For marriage, it is a promise of God's loving presence in Jesus to remain with us through love, strengthening our relationship and our capacity to live a fruitful life of commitment and fidelity.

Reflecting on Scripture together

Use the 'Reflecting on Scripture together — a simple way' in the introduction 'Choosing your Wedding readings'.

Further Reflection

Following the 'slow reading' process, here are some questions for further reflection:

- You have chosen to be married in a Catholic church — why is this important to you?
- What are your hopes for your lives together? What is going to help you 'be so completely one' in God's love and in love with one another?
- What strikes you in particular about Jesus's prayer? Can you hear it as a prayer for your marriage?
- How does it help you knowing that Jesus and the Father are absolutely with you and will remain with you to strengthen you in your marriage?
- In the wedding liturgy, you will make your own solemn prayers and declarations. Have a look at the final 'triple blessings', for example. What strikes you? Try praying them out loud together, replacing the 'you' with 'us'.

May God the eternal Father keep us of one heart in love for one another, that the peace of Christ may dwell in us and abide always in our home. May we be witnesses in the world to God's charity, so that the afflicted and needy who have known our kindness may one day receive us thankfully into the eternal dwelling of God.

- What do you like about this reading? Why might it be a good Gospel for your wedding?

Note about the Reading

This reading is given in a long and short form — either may be chosen.

These notes have been prepared by Caroline Dollard, Marriage & Family Life Project, CBCEW www.catholicfamily.org.uk This is one of a series of Liturgy Office resources to support the *Order of Celebrating Matrimony*. www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources/Marriage © 2016 Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales