

SJTI Homily—15 May 2018
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Texts: Acts 20:17-27, John 17:1-11

Introduction

Retreat or workshop exercise: what would you put on your tombstone?
Importance of the last words of a person as they are dying
We hear this today in the readings.

Paul's experience—leaving Miletus (present day Turkey)

Describes his experience—great energy for ministry—preached, gave himself totally
for the sake of Christ
“on my way to Jerusalem”—no idea what will happen there though he senses
persecution and imprisonment—eventually he is sent to Rome and dies a martyr
“Life to me is not a thing to waste words on”...
What is important is the **mission**
This is how we remember Paul—enormous energy for the Gospel

Jesus—listening to his prayer

Nothing more intimate than listening to a person pray aloud from her/his heart
Example of Catherine of Siena: after the Eucharist, she often prayed aloud and friends wrote
down her prayers
This text is part of his “last will and testament.”
John and his community remembered the words handed down over several decades about Jesus.
To give “eternal life”—really, what is this? Day after day, year after year...a million
years and it is still beginning.
Eternal love—begins now
As with Paul, he had accomplished his mission. “I have finished the work that you have given me to
do.”
“I pray for them”...we are invited—Jesus is praying for us in the 21st century

Last words: mission accomplished

Sense of the unknown future for Paul
Sense of intimacy: Jesus, his Abba and all who believe.

Ourselves

We are in the midst of mission—beginning, middle, the end is nearing
Always the call to do mission well
Generously, creatively, lovingly
Pope Francis—new document on holiness—chapter on mission
Holiness and mission are integral—no dichotomy between prayer and
mission
What is the “new” in mission now in a broken, fractured, divided world? In a
fractured South Africa?

Other people will write our tombstones

If we died today, what do we want them to say about our discipleship?
Would it be the same as what we might say?
If not, why not?
What would Paul write on our tombstones? What would Jesus write?

