

7TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

There are jokes among scripture scholars that, in the Gospel of John, if you ask Jesus **how he is doing**, he will take three chapters to say that he and the Father are just fine.

- Today's Gospel from St John gives us an insight into where this joke comes from.

All that put aside, **three times** in today's gospel Jesus is praying for us that ***we may be one, just as he and the Father are one.***

If Jesus is praying for our oneness it means that he has recognised boundaries and differences that are divisive and these not desirable.

We live in a world full of divisions –

- male or female // rich or poor // gay or straight //
- Christian or Muslim; // conservative or liberal;
- young or old // orthodox or heretic // sinner or saved

We could go on and on listing **boundaries** and **differences**.

- ❖ We do not only encounter these boundaries but we ourselves too often **establish** or **promote** them.

Whether we admit it or not the boundaries we **establish** and **enforce** are usually done in such a way as

- to favour us
For instance is anybody approached you with the question: "Are you saved?" The question by itself portrays a boundary which puts him/her in a position that favours them as the saved ones.
- we usually enforce these boundaries because they tend to reassure us
 - i. that we are the **chosen ones** and **desired ones**.
 - ii. that we are the ones **approved** of and **accepted**.

In this way, **boundaries degenerate into oppositions**. For instance:

- In order for me to win **someone must lose**,
- in order for me to be included **someone must be excluded**.

When boundaries and differences have degenerated into opposition something has gone wrong: the principle of unity destroyed!!!

It is interesting that even when Jesus knows that the principle of unity has been destroyed amongst us his disciples, he still does not pray for our **tolerance**, neither our **getting along**, nor does he pray that we be **nice to each other**.

- ❖ He prays for our oneness

More over, he does not even pray that **our differences would be eliminated**.

- ❖ Instead he prays for our oneness:

Q: What is this oneness?

- ❖ It is a oneness in the midst of difference.

Sometimes we think that to be one with another group we have to change into their uniform.

Sometimes as Catholics we pray for unity thinking that unity will come when all those others have come back to us because we have the monopoly of complete truth.

NO SELLING OF IDENTITY AND INDIVIDUALITY

Any form of unity that requires us to surrender our identity or individuality is in fact working against this oneness.

Let us take a clue from Jesus and his Father.

- Jesus does not stop being Jesus and the Father stop being the Father because they are one.

Jesus and the Father are one because they love and give themselves to each other.

Oneness is a shift in the mode of operation: instead of dealing with each other through established boundaries and differences, we deal each other from the viewpoint of love.

This point of view of love, is God's life. Jesus **that we would be and live like God.**

Our call is to always operate on the viewpoint of love.

- ❖ Oneness is not about eliminating differences.
- ❖ Far too long we have dealt with each other through the prism of our boundaries, differences, and divisions.

Q: So I wonder, which are the boundaries that await to be dealt through the prism of our love?