

SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Acts 1:15-17, 20-26 1 John 4: 11-16 John 17:11-19

HOMILY ON US IN THE WORLD

On the evening of the last supper, seeing himself on his way out Our Lord, says of himself and us:

“And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world..., I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one.” There is a great deal of realism in Jesus’ prayer. What Jesus said about us is true. We are in the world, but at a deep level as he also says in the Gospel, we do not belong to the world. It means that we cannot be part of the world’s dominant ideology about vengeance, retaliation, and the making sure that *“what goes around, comes around.”*

In his prayer Jesus is making clear ‘what he is not praying for’: *“I am not asking you to take them out of the world...”* Even though this is a dangerous world with the threat of evil at every turn, Jesus prays for us, not to be removed and hidden away from the sight of the world, but to be protected in the world. Which means that Christianity is not about separation from the world, it is not about being secluded but rather about taking a stand in the world. It calls for involvement. Why does he pray that we should not be removed from the world? Because we have a significant role to play in this world. We have received his Word, as Jesus repeatedly reminds us as he prays.

We are the ones who know the truth.

We are the ones who know that our God is not the type who is only too ready to smite his enemies. He is not an angry, vengeful God. He is our loving Heavenly Father.

We are the ones who have been taught the secret of the power of forgiveness. As for today, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is an example of a world in desperate need of people who know how to put these true words into concrete action.

The most obvious fact is that Jesus put us here for a reason. We are here to be his representatives in the world, his means of getting God’s will done *“on earth as it is in heaven.”* We are the ones who have to show the world that ‘an eye-for-an-eye’, *only gets everyone eyeless*, ‘a tooth-for-a-tooth’ *only gets everyone tooth-less* and the result is that it leads to a world of endless hostility.

Confronted with a world in conflict we are situated in this very world of conflict to pray and to model this new quality of life that turns the other cheek, goes the second mile, a world that will surrender a shirt off our backs when a coat has been requested.

Jesus is not asking his Father to take us out of this world of conflict but entrusting us with a role to play in areas of conflict. He has us in here for a purpose!