

Reflection for 7th Sunday of Easter. John 17:1-11

Some people are blessed with the sort of relationship with each other, where they are always on the same wavelength, even at times not needing to express their feelings in words. Jesus, we are told, prays often. We do not know what he said or what he prayed but as the earthly human form of God, Jesus had that sort of connection with God, His heavenly Father. John has worked Jesus' words into what is a prayer. We do not know if John remembers these words verbatim or not. Jesus is preparing His followers for the time when He will no longer be physically with them. Jesus' wish is that we, too, should have that intimate relationship with God that Jesus has enjoyed with His Father throughout His time on earth.

Jesus has quite a lot to say about His relationship with His heavenly Father reminding us that He is the reflection of God the Father, that God's glory may be seen in Him. Jesus comes as the earthy revelation of God to enable us to see God through His, Jesus', works and presence on earth and His Resurrection. He asks for protection for those left on earth, again telling us that we all belong together, we are one family. What Jesus prays now grows out of the fact that He is going away. He is entrusting the disciples to the Father, those he has known and loved throughout his own earthly life, the Father who, he knows, will care for them every bit as much as He has done Himself. He is very much aware that the disciples are at risk. The world, which hates them as it hated Him, will threaten and abuse them. They do not belong to the world, but they are to be sent into the world and they need protecting. "Holy Father protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one as we are one".

"So that they may be one as we are one!" We can look at this prayer on several levels. Firstly, the intimate relationship with God that we all seek. All too often we bog ourselves down with formalised prayers or shopping list prayers rather than taking the time to talk and to listen to God. There can be times when we grumble or are upset that when we pour this out before God, we realise that we are blessed and our problems are few and slight.

We can also extend the idea of being one in lots of other ways, in our ecumenical relationships for example. It would be so much better if we were one, rather than pushing our own brand of what is right. We can extend this into personal and international relationships; if we are truly of one mind then many of the problems of the world would simply melt away. "So that they may be one as we are one!"

Eternal God, giver of love and power, your Son Jesus Christ has sent us all into the world to preach the Gospel of His Kingdom: confirm us in this mission and help us to live the Good News we proclaim; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.