



Homily for the Seventh Sunday of Easter

Year A 2014

One day a high school student saw another student having trouble taping a large sign to a wall. When he offered to help, the student snapped: "I don't need any help!" At that, the first student shrugged his shoulders, walked away and sat down.

Ten minutes later the sign was in place. It read: **Working together, we can do anything!**

While we may smile at the story, it makes a point that is sadly true. Human beings often tend to work by themselves and not together. We tend to be better at building fences than at building bridges.

As we approach the feast of Pentecost, the readings are about God calling us to unity as His children. The readings call us to be disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today. To be a disciple is to be filled with gratitude for the love of God...a love that makes us fearless in letting the actions of our lives reflect the faith that we profess each and every time we celebrate the Eucharist together. Our faith calls us to become one with each other and one with the wider world in which we live.

Sadly, our world is divided. It is divided by hate and prejudice. It is divided by greed and self-serving desires. It is divided by walls and barriers that separate us rather than foster our relationships as brothers and sisters.

On a global level we see this in all the places of violence and hatred in our world. We see it when the Holy Father travels to Israel and Palestine and is fearless in urging ancient hatreds to work for peace and unity. We see it in racial prejudice and personal bigotries.

And in our own lives we find these attitudes in our constant striving for what we want for ourselves and for our own happiness with little or no concern for those who have less and who struggle with both a poverty of spirit and a poverty of possessions. It is far too easy to be wrapped up in oneself than to have compassion for others.

Jesus in the Gospel says He is praying for "them." We are the "them" that He is talking about. And Christ prays for us that we may learn not to build fences but to tear down walls. Christ prays that one by one we might remove stones from the walls that separate us and allow God's love to shine through and bring healing to our world.