

PREGO PLUS: BACKGROUND NOTES
SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER – YEAR B

Second Reading 1 John 4: 11–16

The author of the letter continues his reflection on God's love. He gives us new insights. The starting point is God's love for us. God loved us first and sent his only Son.

No one has ever seen God. Only Jesus reveals fully who the Father is. But as God is love, every time we see love around us, we see God at work.

First-century Christians were often in conflict over boundaries between communities, fine theological points or false teaching. But if we love others as God loves us, these boundaries disappear – as indeed Jesus showed us by touching lepers or healing people on the Sabbath.

Failing to love one another is a sure sign that we do not truly appreciate God's love for us.

Just as a child who has had a loving childhood finds it easy to show love as an adult, when I realise what God has done for me out of love, I cannot but want to spread this love around me.



Gospel John 17: 11–19

Today's text comes after the Farewell Discourses, and is part of what is often called the 'priestly prayer' of Jesus. Throughout the Gospels we often see Jesus at prayer, but rarely hear the actual words of his prayer. In this section, Jesus is praying to his Father for the disciples – the people God has given him 'from the world' – while in their presence.

Jesus asks four things of his Father for his disciples:

- * Unity : 'that they should be one' (He wishes for them the same unity as the one he experiences with his Father).
- * Joy
- * Protection from the evil one.
- * That they should be able to fulfil their mission.

The world

Here, the world does not mean Nature or God's creation, but the negative forces and people around us; our civilisation and culture; people who do not accept God. The disciples came from that society and have to continue working within it.

Being a follower of Christ at that time, as indeed is also often the case nowadays, means going against the prevailing trends in society.

'They' and 'Them'

Although Jesus ostensibly speaks about the disciples, his prayer is timeless and we can feel included.



'As you sent me
into the world,
I have sent them
into the world.'