

Reflection for 7th Sunday of Easter

Acts 1:15-17, 20-26

1 John 4:11-16

Gospel John 17:11-19



When we realise our weakness, we realise our discipleship

Discipleship, we learn from this Sunday's readings, means transformation, means thankfulness, means accepting God's will. As the psalm says, 'The Lord has set his sway'. Jesus prays that we be 'one like us', leading me to the blessed but at the same time terrifying understanding that God has chosen me and given me to Jesus.

Jean Vanier writes of this Gospel passage, 'This holiness is not something we achieve; it is given.' [1]

We don't only become disciples by being committed activists, full of austere courage, brimming with facts and figures about the arms trade say, or high level analysis of geopolitics. The world won't thank us for bearing witness, it is true, or causing a disruption and standing in the way of its business. But according to Jean Vanier, Christ's prayer calls us to accept our vulnerability.

When I visited friends in Kabul last year, unlike in most well-to-do houses, and institutions, there was no armed guard. I signed a statement, asking not to be rescued if I was kidnapped. I tried not to think about the implications of this, remembering S. Brian Willson's words, 'We are not worth more' [2]. Instead I followed my hosts' precautions, taking different routes, not speaking in public, even though taxi drivers often wanted a chat. Stuck in a massive traffic jam once, our driver even warned off a nosy policeman, saying we were Turkish. I had no choice but to put my faith in the people around me. But then I had a passport and a plane ticket, a heavily-guarded international airport, to fly in and out of.

As followers of Jesus' way of nonviolence, we become vulnerable. When we put ourselves in the way of the businesses and powers that put greed over human life, we come to realise our weakness, and realise our discipleship.

Guide us into the way of Peace.

[1] Vanier, Jean, *Drawn into the mystery of Jesus through the Gospel of John*, DLT Books, London 2004, p296

[2] S. Brian Willson is an American peace activist and Vietnam War veteran who lost both his legs blockading arms shipments bound for Central America in 1987

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