

Seventh Sunday of Easter – May 17, 2015

Can you remember a time in your life when a significant elder – you father, your mother, a teacher, a pastor, a boss, a dean, an uncle, an aunt, or any respected elder, took a true delight in you, your energies, your talents, your ideas, your looks, your person? Can you remember a time when you heard a significant elder in your life say to you: “In you I take delight?” If you have had experiences like these, you have been blessed. If you or I have not been sufficiently blessed, take heart. WE can’t give ourselves the blessing we need, but we can bless others. And we should. Why? When we act like Jesus, we get to feel like Jesus. When we act petty, we get to feel petty.

The mark of a deeply mature man or woman, the mark of a very mature disciple of Jesus is this: he or she is a person who blesses others and blesses the world, just as God does and just as Jesus did.

In this vein, then, reflect with me on today’s Gospel. Don’t be put off by John’s complicated language. What’s going on here is fairly simple. Jesus is blessing his disciples and us too, by praying for them and for us. It’s Jesus’ final testament, the most precious desire of God who gave his life for us. Amazing, isn’t it? Jesus is blessing us by praying for us.

Jesus prays that we will be protected and strengthened by God. He prays that we will share in his joy. He prays that we will be guarded against the evil one. He prays that we will be one in him as brothers and sisters. He wants us to be consecrated, made holy, in the truth, not just for ourselves, but for the whole world. He wants his kingdom to come even now.

This is Jesus’ final testament, his blessing, his prayer. It’s good to remember this. It feels good just to say it: Jesus is praying for us; Jesus is blessing us.

We need better to look at our lives and see ourselves always as blessed, no matter what. What Jesus does for us is to teach us how to bless: to see truly another person, to speak well of him or her, and to give away some of our life so that he or she might have more life.

God blesses the world by seeing it as good, delighting in it, and giving away his Son to save it. You and I have been blessed; we too can bless and we should. Jesus is praying for us.