**HOMILY FOR FRIDAY 27/03/20 GOSPEL: JOHN 7:1-2,10,25-30**

In this rather strange passage in John’s Gospel the conversation seems to be all about the identity of Jesus. Who is He? The lectionary has conflated the passage and in doing so has lost rather a lot of the logic of the various conversations that take place. Nevertheless, we get the idea that people from the Jewish leaders, the crowd of ordinary people who came into contact with Jesus, and even His disciples, had differing views.

The Christian Church has been wrestling with this problem from the very beginning. As strange ideas about Jesus began to circulate it became necessary for the church to make clear what the apostles experience of being with Jesus had led them to believe. Over time this resulted in the writing of what we now call the Creeds; statements of faith that make clear who Jesus is and what His life, death and resurrection really mean to those who follow Him. That is why we say one of the creeds at nearly every formal act of worship, every Communion service and every baptism. The statements in the creeds are implied in all our liturgies.

It’s sad that in a country like ours, there are many people who claim to be Christians do not have clear sense of who Jesus is. If a person does not have a basic knowledge of who Jesus really is based on the Apostles’ teaching then, even if they were brought up to call themselves Christians, the Jesus they claim believe in would have to be a Jesus of their own imagination - a human construct. A correct knowledge of who Jesus is the first necessity underlying a true faith in Him. And ,therefore, the crucial question for every one of us to be able to answer correctly is, *“Who is Jesus Christ?”* We need to get that one right!

In the gospel reading many people had wrong views about Jesus. : Jesus’ brothers offer Him some unsolicited “career” advice: *“You want to be famous. Go to Jerusalem, do some miracles, and you’ll hit the big time!”* The Jewish leaders had a hostile view of Jesus: *“This man is upsetting our traditions: We need to kill Him!”* Jesus threatened their power, which they used to control the people through fear He didn’t fit their idea of a political Messiah who would play their political game and reward them all with nice positions in His kingdom. When He upset the money-changers’ tables in the temple, He threatened their income. Jesus threatened their comfortable way of life or what we would call the status quo!

Some said, *“He is a good man.”* John Stott points out in his well-known book, ‘*Basic Christianity’,* that if Jesus was not God in human flesh, His claims would have meant that He was not a good man, but a very self-centered man. No good man, who was not God in human flesh, could say such things as he said about himself without being considered a deluded megalomaniac.

Implicit in Jesus’ words is the truth that if we follow Him, we will not fit in comfortably with the world. Living with Jesus truly as Lord will not make you the most popular person at the office or at school.

Finally, if you truly believe Jesus is, as the creeds declare, Saviour and Lord, you must be at war with the evil and injustices in the world. As John wrote in his first letter ***“Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”***

# Some questions to think about:

1. Someone tells you, “I believe that Jesus was a very good man, but I don’t believe He is God.” How would you reply?
2. What does it look like in daily practice to be at war with the world? Think about the practical implications of 1 John 2:15-17.

*‘Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.’*