

## Homily for VII (7) Sunday of Easter Year C (World Communications Day) 29-05-2022 by

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**First Reading: Acts 7:55-60**

**Psalm: Psalm 97**

**Second Reading: Revelation 22:12-14,16-17,20**

**Gospel: John 17:20-26**

### **DO YOU LISTEN TO OTHERS?**

On this day that we celebrate World Communications Day, we must pause and ask ourselves how well we communicate among ourselves as brothers and sisters, ministers, couples, confreres, and friends, who are all children of God. No one is an island, and that means communication is indispensable in every human society since we are all social beings by nature living in the society. As humans, we cannot thrive and co-exist peacefully in a society where there is no healthy communication. And a healthy communication requires proper dialogue which involves speaking frankly and listening patiently with openness. When there is a breakdown in communication, therefore, conflict is bound to arise due to misunderstanding. The breakdown in communication can take place at times even when there is apparent dialogue, especially when despite the many dialogues, we are simply just waiting for the other person to finish speaking in order to impose our point of view. In this way, it means we are just talking past each other without listening to ourselves. This is similar to the bone of contention in our first reading regarding the preaching of St. Stephen in the book of Acts. He spoke to the people about the truth of the glory of Jesus the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God. But then, rather than listen to him, they shouted out at him and shut their ears from hearing, taking him out of the city to be stoned to death. How hard it is to welcome the truth when it is bitter!

Indeed, as Pope Francis notes in his message for the 56<sup>th</sup> world communications day, “listening is, therefore, the first indispensable ingredient of dialogue and good communication. Communication does not take place if listening has not taken place.” He adds, “in order to provide solid, balanced, and complete information, it is necessary to listen for a long time.” Jesus fully aware of this takes His time to instruct His disciples in the pericope of the final part of His high priestly prayer in today’s gospel. What is most remarkable is not just that He prayed and instructed them while they listened to the end, but the fact that He suddenly turns His focus from a concern for the circle of His disciples to a concern for the wider circle of His future disciples including you and me who have come to believe through their words. As the immediate disciples of Jesus were only Jews, His future disciples however would be made up of not just Jews but also all non-Jewish peoples like us today. And His prayer is that we should remain united in oneness of mind, heart and spirit, just like He is united with the Father. This reveals that He intended the Catholicity of the Church where there is unity in diversity, as the only guarantee of His continued presence with us. But how can diverse peoples drawn from every corner of the earth, culture and language, be able to live together in love and unity? Such unity of His followers implies mutual love, respect, service, honour, and friendship amongst us all who belong to Him. This cannot be possible without healthy vertical and horizontal communication among us.

Without healthy communication with God, we cannot have healthy communication with our neighbour since faith comes from hearing, hearing the word of God (Cf. Romans 10:17). God who is always communicating Himself to us speaks His word to us every day, but we cannot hear Him except we listen. But when we listen, we surely understand. What is God telling you now? Today, He calls us to be united in Him and with one another in an unbroken bond of love. We must seek what unites, rather than what separates, since, without love, we cannot have God’s spirit and presence in us as affirmed also by John who is only able to hear the voice of Jesus speaking to him today because He listened. In the end, only those who listen will be invited to come to Him. May the Lord open the ears of our hearts to listen to Him and to one another in love. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.