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Based on the gospel for Sunday 1 June, Seventh Sunday of Easter, John 17:20-26

"The glory that you have given to me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me."

In his first speech on the balcony of St Peter's basilica, Pope Leo XIV said, "Help us ... help each other to build bridges – with dialogue, with encounter, uniting all of us to be one people always in peace."

I find this deeply challenging. Anyone who has ever tried to build bridges between disputing factions, whether on a local or international level knows how difficult it is – and I'm sure that's most of us.

But the gospel passage shows that unity is a sign of Christ's presence with us. It's a prerequisite. I find it helpful to think of it in terms of battling the human propensity to put people in boxes. I wonder whether a first step towards becoming a bridge-builder might be to reflect on how I fall victim to this tendency. Awareness of sin in ourselves can propel us towards genuine love of others. A love which brings us together.

Loving God,
may we discern the true depths of our hearts, not to become inward-looking but so that we might reach out to the world with more of Christ's love.
Amen.



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This reflection and prayer were written by Rima Devereaux, a CAFOD volunteer and an Associate of the Iona Community.



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