

**FOR THE WEEKEND OF MARCH 20 - 21, 2021**

Fifth Sunday of Lent

**Gospel reading (Fifth Sunday of Lent, Year B)**

Jn 12:20-33

Some Greeks who had come to worship at the Passover Feast  
came to Phillip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee,  
and asked him, “Sir, we would like to see Jesus.”  
Phillip went and told Andrew:  
then Andrew and Phillip went and told Jesus.  
Jesus answered them,  
“The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.  
Amen, amen, I say to you,  
unless a grain of what falls to the ground and dies,  
it remains just a grain of wheat;

but if it dies, it produces much fruit.  
Whoever loves his life loses it,  
and whoever hates his life in this world  
will preserve it for eternal life.  
Whoever serves me must follow me,  
and where I am, there also will my servant be.  
The Father will honor whoever serves me.

“I am troubled now. Yet what should I say?  
‘Father, save me from this hour’?  
But it was for this purpose that I came to this hour.  
Father, glorify your name.”  
Then a voice came from heaven,  
“I have glorified it and will glorify it again.”  
The crowd there heard it and said it was thunder;  
but others said, “An angel has spoken to him.”  
Jesus answered and said,

“This voice did not come for my sake but for yours.  
Now it the time of judgement on this world;  
now the ruler of this world will be driven out.  
And when I am lifted up from the earth,  
I will draw everyone to myself.”  
He said this indicating the kind of death he would die.

**Homily helper / connection to stewardship / giving / charity / almsgiving**

* What is glory? According to the world:
  + =Power—the ability to do whatever you want, to be invulnerable, untouchable
  + =Prestige—having high renown or an immaculate reputation won through grand achievements
  + =Splendor—ostentatiousness, overwhelming beauty, grandeur
* These are all fine. But in John’s Gospel, Jesus offers us a dramatically different account of Glory: the image of a seed falling to the ground and dying.
  + Glory is the ability to give oneself completely and totally for another, so that they might have life.
    - Just as the Father gives Himself completely to the Son in the inner life of God, so Jesus seeks to glorify the Father by giving Himself for humanity, so that we can participate in the Divine Life.
* The Cross is the place where Jesus demonstrates His Glory
  + In the Resurrection and the Ascension, yes….
  + ….but--especially in John’s Gospel--the Cross is highlighted as the place where Jesus glorifies the Father
  + The Cross then, a place of death and shame for criminals, becomes the Royal Throne of God
* Glory is Fruitful!
  + The Cross is the place of Glory, not merely because it is a place of sacrifice…
  + …but because Christ’s sacrifice on the cross is fruitful
  + By being raised up on the Cross, Jesus draws all of humanity to himself; we are grafted into His Body, and share in the Divine Life…talk about fruitful!
* We are called to glorify God, too; let’s follow the model of Jesus
  + Because we are united to Christ, we can glorify God as He did
  + Through generous fruitful sacrifice
  + So many opportunities to do so; Lenten almsgiving; consider the Annual Diocesan Appeal

**Intercession**

That we may glorify God by generously supporting our Annual Appeal.

**Copy for bulletin announcement**

What images come to mind when you hear the word “glory?” An American flag flying high as fighter jets streak across the sky? Confetti falling on the winning team as they hoist another trophy? Or perhaps a celebrity all decked out as they accept an award? These are all pretty reasonable representations of glory, on a human level. So when Jesus speaks about glorifying the Father, we might expect him to paint a similar kind of picture: one of power, grandeur, and awe. Instead, the clearest image Christ gives us in today’s Gospel is of a grain of wheat falling to the ground and dying. Hm. Not exactly what most of us have in mind when we think “glorious.”

In typical fashion, though, Jesus is showing us that the ways of God are not the ways of men. While God’s glory does include His power and awesomeness and majesty and might, it also includes something else that we might find a little surprising: the giving of Himself for another, so that they might have life. This is why Christ’s Self-Gift on the Cross—perhaps even more so then the Resurrection or the Ascension—is highlighted in John’s Gospel as the place of His Glory. And it’s why the Cross has been called Christ’s Royal Throne throughout Christian history.

We are called to glorify God, too. And we can’t do better than by imitating Jesus, offering generous, fruitful sacrifices in union with Christ. This Lenten season is the perfect time to do so. We can take part in many opportunities for almsgiving. We can also contribute to our Annual Diocesan Appeal, allowing a grain of our wealth to bear much fruit in our parish community. As we go forward this week, let’s ask God to show us how we can glorify His name by giving generously in imitation of Christ.

**Copy for pulpit announcement**

As you prayerfully discern how to glorify God this week, consider making a donation to the Annual Diocesan Appeal. Like the single grain of wheat, your generous gift can bear an immense amount of fruit in our parish community, helping us to invite others more deeply into the life of God.

**Social media post/content**

Photo:   
Seed falling onto dirt.   
“Take some of the first fruits of the harvest and set them in front of the altar of the Lord your God” (Deuteronomy 26: 2,4)

Copy: Glorify God through your generosity. Support the Annual Diocesan Appeal.