

Collect and Readings for Worship at Home

Sunday 17th March - Fifth Sunday of Lent

Collect:

Most merciful God,
who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ
delivered and saved the world:
grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross
we may triumph in the power of his victory;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever

Amen

Readings:

First Reading: Jeremiah 31:31-34 : A New Covenant

The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, ‘Know the LORD’, for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

Gospel: John 12:20-33

Some Greeks Wish to See Jesus

Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, ‘Sir, we wish to see Jesus.’ Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Jesus answered them, ‘The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honour.

Jesus Speaks about His Death

‘Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—“Father, save me from this hour”? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name.’ Then a voice came from heaven, ‘I have

glorified it, and I will glorify it again.' The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, 'An angel has spoken to him.' Jesus answered, 'This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. Now is the judgement of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.' He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

Reflection:

The passage we have this morning from John's Gospel stands as Jesus' final teaching in public, and interestingly it is said to both Jews and Gentiles. As the Greeks come to Phillip to ask if they can see Jesus, Jesus realises that His time has come. At the moment I tend to read from the New Living Translation of the Bible and here in verse 21 the Greeks are quoted as saying meet Jesus. I feel there is a difference in these words. To meet Jesus I think is one of the key themes of John's Gospel, it is about a personal encounter with Jesus, it is about meeting Him. So Jesus knows that His time has come. As John quite often does he tells us who Jesus is and that is summed up by this phrase, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified." Its here we have a turning point in the Gospel, we move from that public side with signs and teaching, guiding the people, to a time when He will be Glorified. 'Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say— "Father, save me from this hour"? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name.' Then a voice came from heaven, 'I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.' It's at this point we see that Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life. When a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies the seed germinates and produces a stalk of wheat. Jesus in his death and resurrection gives life to all who believe in Him. Jesus is glorified through His death, He is lifted up on the cross so that all can see and be gathered to Him, so that through His resurrection "everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life." What does glory mean to you. Its in this word that we have a distinct difference between the view the secular and Christian world. The secular world view of being glorified is all about having, the Christian view is about giving. In the following Chapters we read how Jesus defines glory. He washes His Disciples feet, He knows He is to be betrayed, He knows people will deny knowing Him, yet He still brings comfort, as we read in Chapter 14. In these few verses we read how John is trying to get us to see, to meet Jesus, his words leave us in no doubt that Jesus is the son of man, the Messiah.