

Lent Reflections 2024 -Through the Desert God Leads us to Freedom- Pope Francis

5th Sunday 17th March – Jesus Hour has Come- signs of courage and Hope

Readings

Jeremiah 31:31-34

Psalm 50(51):3-4,12-15 A pure heart create for me.

Hebrews 5:7-9

Gospel John 12:20-33

Among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. These approached Philip, who came from Bethsaida in Galilee, and put this request to him, "Sir, we should like to see Jesus." Philip went to tell Andrew, and Andrew and Philip together went to tell Jesus. Jesus replied to them:

"Now the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I tell you, most solemnly, unless a wheat grain falls on the ground and dies, it remains only a single grain; but if it dies, it yields a rich harvest. Anyone who loves his life loses it; anyone who hates his life in this world. will keep it for the eternal life. If a man serves me, he must follow me, wherever I am, my servant will be there too. If anyone serves me, my Father will honour him. Now my soul is troubled. What shall I say: Father, save me from this hour? But it was for this very reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name!" A voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." People standing by, who heard this, said it was a clap of thunder; others said, "It was an angel speaking to him." -Jesus answered, "It was not for my sake that this voice came, but for yours. "Now sentence is being passed on this world; now the prince of this world is to be overthrown. And when I am lifted up from the earth, I shall draw all men to myself." By these words he indicated the kind of death he would die.

Today we become aware that Jesus' "hour" had come. The time to see him had come and gone. Now it was time for him to be "hidden" in death, which is just what Jesus goes on to say. "My heart is troubled." And then he says that it's time to die, time to go the way of a kernel of wheat so that greater fruitfulness could be generated.

Quiet Reflection followed by Discussion

- When his followers say they want he see Jesus, he replies – The hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified.... "unless a wheat grain falls on the ground and dies, it remains only a single grain; but if it dies, it yields a rich harvest." What is this saying to us?
- It seems that large numbers are now following Jesus, and local leaders do not appreciate or understand who this person is and what he is saying. He doesn't speak of power and influence, but of weakness and losing his life. How do we react?
- And when I am lifted up from the earth, I shall draw all men to myself." Is this a sign of hope to us today?

Pope Francis says in his Lenten message-"When our God reveals himself, his message is always one of freedom: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery" (*Ex* 20:2). To the extent that this Lent becomes a time of conversion, an anxious humanity will notice a burst of creativity, **a flash of new hope**..... Let us find the courage to see our world, not as being in its death throes but in a process of giving birth, not at the end but at the beginning of a great new chapter of history. We need courage to think like this"

Closing Prayer –

God of sacrifices, help us to follow you and to serve you. Lead us to new life with you, and work through us so that we may better reflect your kingdom of peace here on earth. Amen. Cafod 5th Sunday Lent 2024