

# LENT 2021: Our Hope Renewed

5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent



Wheat Field with a Partridge ~ Vincent van Gogh

*“Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain.”*

## *Opening Prayer*

Lord on this 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent

let truly us know that you are our compassionate companion, who constantly invites all into your care.

Who is with us at our darkest moments and wishes what is good for us simply because You love us.

Give us servant hearts, Lord, that we may have the strength and courage to face what life throws our way with love and a steadfast spirit, as Jesus, Your Son, did among us, who lives with You and the Holy Spirit forever. Amen

## *Readings for the Fifth Sunday of Lent - Year B*

**First Reading:** Jeremiah 31: 31-34

**Psalm:** Psalm 50(51): 3-4, 12-15

**Second Reading:** Hebrews 5: 7-9

## *Gospel Reading: John 12: 20-33*

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.

'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.

## *Lectio Divina*

### **Reading**

Take your time and read the passage. Get a sense of what it is saying. Read the passage a second time. Listen for any words or phrases that strike you, and listen

in your heart. Be attentive to detail. Note versus or phrases that stand out to you. Where to understand meaning and background.

In this passage... My favourite verse was... I noticed...

### **Reflecting**

Read the passage again, slowly. As you pause on the words or phrases that strike you, take time to consider what the word, phrase, or passage means, particularly its connection to your life. Imagine being present to hear the passage or witness the story.

This reminds me of... If I were there... I can connect this story to...

### **Responding**

Read the passage again, slowly. Consider now how God has spoken to you in this passage and respond back to him. You may want to consider how this passage is asking you to act differently. Thank God for his word. Ask him to lead you into deeper understanding.

Dear Jesus... Thank you God for... Please help me understand...

### **Remaining**

Now take some time to simply remain in the presence of God. Quiet expression of love between you and God. Note what God is trying to teach you through the passage and time of prayer.

I think Jesus is teaching me... Lord, I love you for... I believe...

### *Reflection*

As with weeks 3 & 4 the Gospel for the 5th Sunday of Lent is taken from John. In John's gospel Jesus made three visits to Jerusalem for Passover celebrations. This passage is an account of what happened on this final visit and took place in the days before his arrest and execution - He knows his death is imminent.

Jesus' final entry to Jerusalem and his journey towards the grave are of interest to the people round about. On the face of it, Jesus was the celebrity of the day. He was well known, his reputation had spread, hostility and opposition to him has increased and he was, for some, a source of fascination and intrigue.

Only John tells us this story about the Greek visitors. They want to meet him, so they approach two of his first disciples. This curiosity of these few Greeks provides the setting for the last public discourse of Jesus, directed in the first place towards his disciples and later as a response to the people. This encounter with these 'foreigners' stirs Jesus' compassion. He recalls once again that his mission is for people of all nations. Jesus drops a hint to his disciples about his inner turmoil, which they remember after his death and while Jesus is speaking about his 'hour of suffering' God intervenes with an audible voice from heaven. It appears some people hear the voice and others think it is thunder, but Jesus makes it clear that God's words are for the peoples' benefit rather than to reassure him.

This can be a difficult Gospel to sit with but at the root of the reading today is God's passionate love for frail humanity - including you and me. There is a constant reminder that in Jesus there are no foreigners; that even in our darkest hour our God walks with us; that the invitation to this relationship of love is never withdrawn.

1. The Greeks come to Philip with humility and their request is a beautiful, humble prayer: What is your prayer today?
2. Remember a time of crises which you or somebody close to you had to face: your spouse, partner, child or yourself at the onset of labour; on the day before a major exam; a family member or yourself about to undergo surgery; sitting with a loved one in their last, precious moments...  
While there was much fear and apprehension, you just knew that this was what you had been preparing for, and you said yes to it with courage and strength. Take some time to say thanks for the strength and learning received.
3. *"Whoever serves me must follow me."* Who is Jesus calling me to serve? How can I follow Jesus more closely? This week make a conscious effort to share your faith with someone by word or action.

### *Closing Prayer*

Thank you, Lord, for those who help us to remember that Your Father in heaven is also there for us and with us in times of sadness and frustration. Forgive us for the times we did not take risks for you and thus missed the opportunity to inform others of the Good news of your life, death, and resurrection. Help us to always realise that your Father is with us always and understands our sadness and difficulties and will help us if we but call on Him as you did. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

May almighty God bless us, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.