

## 5th Sunday of Lent, Year B

### GOSPEL

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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.

(John 12:20-33)

### DID YOU KNOW?

Points of interest and Catholic lore

- In the gospels, Jesus often refers to himself as the Son of Man, a mysterious expression that both reveals and conceals his identity. It is a term that comes from the Book of Daniel.
- The festival referred to here was the Passover (John 12:1). Observant Jews who were able to come from far and wide to celebrate this great festival at the temple in Jerusalem. The city was overflowing with pilgrims from many lands and regions.

- Often, people stayed outside the city because accommodation was very stretched at the times of the pilgrimage festivals. They came into the city each day to celebrate and then returned outside the walls to sleep, either in a nearby village or, often, under the stars.
- This is exactly what Jesus did on his final Passover visit to Jerusalem. After celebrating the meal, he was returning to Bethany where his friends Mary, Martha and Lazarus lived. On the way, he stopped to pray at the Garden of Gethsemane and there accepted his fate.
- The Passover is just one of the three great pilgrimage festivals of Judaism.

### EXPLORING THE WORD

The Greeks referred to in this text are likely to have been 'God-fearers' or non-Jewish people who are attracted to Judaism as a religion. Not being born Jews, they are unable to fully become part of the chosen people of Israel and to enter into its religious life. Here, though, they express their wish to 'see Jesus'. The classic call to discipleship is 'Come and see'. There is an element here that builds on earlier references in John to the fact that the gospel is not just for the Jews but for all people who express faith. The call of the gospel is universal. The imminent death of the grain is already beginning to yield a rich harvest. Jesus is well aware of the fate in store for him but accepts that this is the central act of his mission. Glorification and exultation await him. It is in being lifted up that Jesus will draw all people to himself.

- In what ways do you feel drawn to Jesus at this point in your journey?
- Reflect back on what caused you to say, 'Sir, I would like to see Jesus.' What called you to discipleship?

### MAKING CONNECTIONS

Opportunities for group discussion and personal prayer

- What might have to 'die' in you in order for something new to take root and grow?
- How do you understand the call to be a servant to others?
- Make choices for the benefit of others this week. Die to yourself a little.
- Reflect a little on your own experiences of death—not necessarily a physical death but a time of loss, abandonment or failure. How did you respond to this? Can you see now that 'life' came from this experience? Share your reflections together.
- Repeat this prayer often this week:

*Lord, may I die to myself in Jesus so that through him I may have new life.*

