



Fifth Sunday of Lent

Some Greeks who had come up to worship at the Passover Feast came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, "Sir, we would like 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. Amen, amen, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat 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 is the time of judgment 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.

Introductory Prayer: Lord, my prayer time is the most important time of the day. I know that if I give myself with fervor, everything today will be blessed more deeply by your grace. Here I am Lord, confident and grateful for your paternal love for me.

Petition: Help me to be a true apostle.

1. "We Would Like to See Jesus" We are drawing near to the climax of our Lenten

observance. Holy Week will soon be upon us. In the readings of this final week of Lent, we will accompany the Lord through the difficult and contentious experience of continuous controversy with the scribes and Pharisees. In today's reading, we hear of some Greeks going to Philip to request an audience with Our Lord; we are reminded of our mission as Christ's disciples. When people see and interact with us, our Catholic spirit must be, so to speak, a sneak preview of being with the Lord. They may be prompted to take a bigger step themselves if our lives truly reflect the goodness of Christ. They will want what we have — "We would like to see Jesus." Hearing those words (or similar ones) from a relative, friend or coworker is one of the greatest joys of the committed Christian.

2. "Unless the Grain of Wheat Falls to the Ground..." If bringing souls to Christ is one of our greatest joys, we need to be prepared — they don't come cheaply. Archbishop Fulton Sheen used to tell the story of a troubled soul who came to him proclaiming her commitment to a life of disbelief and depravity. That was a challenge he could not take lying down. He begged the Lord to send him crosses and sacrifices that he could offer up for her salvation. That's a type of prayer not to be made lightly! Archbishop Sheen soon found himself suffering an incredible string of setbacks, inconveniences and downright annoyances. But he stayed patient through it all and offered it up for that soul. Later he had the consolation of pronouncing over her the blessed words of sacramental absolution. What are we willing to undergo for the salvation of souls, especially those who have a special claim on our love and concern?

3. "I Will Draw Everyone to Myself." The salvation of souls is a task that Christ calls us to, but we are not on our own. He longs for this infinitely more than we ourselves. "When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself." He is speaking about the power that will radiate from the cross. It will not be a merely external power; he is working on the inside of souls. His continuous urgings, at times subtle and discreet, at others vigorous and demanding, are at work opening minds and hearts to his love. Let us recommit ourselves to be the servants of his undying, ever-present love!

Conversation with Christ: Lord, you long to draw all people to yourself. I hope and pray that I can be an effective ambassador of your love. Help me to show others how fulfilling is the life that is lived purely for you!

Resolution: I will put aside my reluctance and invite someone to Mass or another

spiritual activity.

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