A Reading from the Gospel of John 12:20–33: The Coming of Jesus’ Hour

Some Greeks who had come 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.

1. Jesus says to His disciples, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.” What do you think Jesus is speaking of?

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2. Jesus uses the image of wheat to make an analogy. What analogy does He make and what do you think it means?

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3. What does the voice of God the Father say in this Gospel reading? What do you think this means?

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4. We have learned during this Lenten journey that Lent is a time for reflecting in a special way on the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Christ, and for doing penance for our sins. It is also a time for a spiritual "spring cleaning," when we renew our relationship with God. We are called to give alms, to pray, and to fast. How do you think the message of Lent is present in this Gospel?

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5. What is this Gospel passage calling us to in our own lives? What promises does this Gospel make if we live what it teaches?

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Next Sunday is Palm Sunday. It is the beginning of the holiest week of the liturgical year – Triduum. During Triduum we prayerfully enter into Christ’s suffering and Death on the Cross before His victorious Resurrection on Easter Sunday. In this week’s Gospel, Jesus tells us that the time for His suffering and Death is near. He told us of His coming Passion numerous times in the Gospels. He told us that following Him meant that we must also follow Him to the Cross. He told us plainly that to be His disciple means that we too will suffer and be persecuted, and that we will have to carry our own crosses.

Jesus knew that the path to Easter Sunday would be hard. Remember, Jesus is fully God and fully human. He suffered greatly – physically and emotionally. He knows what it is like to be you and me – even in our suffering. And He knows that following Him and being a faithful Christian is hard too. But He also promised us that despite the challenges we would face as Christians, we will find our reward in Heaven. He promised us eternal life with God in Heaven. He promised us His glory. And then, He proved all of His promises to us by rising from the dead.

Jesus challenged all of us when He said, “If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.” (Luke 9:23-24). Being a disciple of Jesus means carrying our own cross and following in His footsteps.

1. What are three ways that it can be hard to be a follower of Jesus?

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2. What are two specific things that you can do this week to take up your own cross and follow Jesus?

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