

Sunday Homily Fifth Sunday of the Lent- 21 March 2021

Readings – Jeremiah 31:31-34

Hebrews 5: 7-9

Gospel: John 12:20-33

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The first reading, taken from the book of the Prophet Jeremiah, explains how God will replace the Old Covenant of judgement with a New Covenant of Forgiveness of sins. In the second reading, St. Paul tells the Hebrews that it is by Jesus' suffering and death, in obedience to his Father's will, that Jesus established the New Covenant.

The Gospel speaks about the Passover times in Jerusalem. Passover time in Jerusalem was a time of joy and excitement for the Jews. Certain Greeks who had come to the feast were ethnically not Jews, but they came from different parts of the world. These Greeks come to Phillip, since Phillip had a Greek name, He may have spoken Greek. They wanted to see Jesus, who is the new prophet. Phillip and Andrew asked Jesus, probably expecting an yes or no answer. Instead Jesus starts by talking about the planting of seeds.

He says 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. The image that Jesus presents is simple yet strong. He does not speak of 'passing away' or 'falling asleep' but of death and loss. Actually, the Gospel hints at the inner struggle of Jesus in accepting the cup of suffering to inaugurate the New and Eternal Covenant. Jesus accepts the cross as his "hour", the passion, death, resurrection and exaltation. It is a parable which He will relate to His own death. He talks about true discipleship. The true disciple follows Jesus at the real risk of losing his or her own life. He says that the call to discipleship is not one to "Come and dine" but it is "Come and die." Not every wheat grain will germinate. Without the

right conditions, a grain will lie dormant and never bear fruit. The grain needs sun, rain, nutrients before it can begin to grow. Is my faith life dormant? Or am I nourishing it so that it will yield an abundant harvest? Jesus doesn't mean actually hating our life, but he means turning away from ourselves. He says we have the seed of greatness in us.

Though we are simple faithful there is a treasure placed in our life. When God created us He placed everything in us, whatever we need. But we need to activate it. We are an anointed seed which has the power to grow. But the wheat falls to the ground and dies. The seed has a time of silence. There is season of silence in all our life. Silence does not mean God is not working in our life, but He is changing our life. He is preparing for something higher and better. Isolation has a celebrating meaning too. When the wheat is under the earth nothing changes seen from outside. But there is a change inside is happening. God does the greatest work in isolation. Silence is a sign that God is closely watching us. The reason is that we are hidden and are extremely valuable. Jesus' goal for us is not a safe, or a feel-good life. Jesus wants for us abundant life.

Amen