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Commentary on the Gospel: “I will draw all men to myself”

Gospel for the 5th Sunday in Lent (Cycle B), and commentary.

Gospel (*Jn 12:20-33*)

Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew went with Philip and they told Jesus. And Jesus answered them,

“The hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If any one serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there shall my servant be also; if any one serves me, the Father will honor him.

“Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, for this purpose I have come to this hour. Father, glorify thy name.”

Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.”

The crowd standing by heard it and said that it had thundered. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.”

Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the ruler of this world be cast out; and I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.” He said this to show by what death he was to die.

Commentary

Shortly before Jesus' Passion, some Greeks who want to see the Master present their request to Philip. This petition on the part of those who in some way represented the Gentile people prompted a discourse from our Lord filled with deep revelations.

The arrival of those Gentiles seems to have reawakened in Jesus the awareness of the imminence of his supreme sacrifice for all mankind. Our Lord is deeply distressed and

says he could ask the Father to deliver him from that hour. But using the image of the grain of wheat that dies in the ground, he proclaims the great fruitfulness that the sacrifice of Calvary will bring about, which is made present at every Mass and reaches every corner of the world.

Regarding the abundant fruit produced by Christ's sacrifice, the Holy Cure of Ars boldly stated that each Mass "causes the whole heavenly court to rejoice, alleviates the pain of the souls in purgatory, and draws down all types of blessings upon earth. It gives more glory to God than all the sufferings of all the martyrs put together, more glory than the penances of all the saints, than all the tears shed by them since the beginning of the world and all that they may do till the end of time."

Jesus also pronounces a prophecy about the Sacrifice he is about to offer: “and I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself” (v. 32). On the Cross, Jesus snatched from the devil the record of debt that stood against us (cf. *Col* 2:14) and obtained for us the forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God.

Saint Josemaría once said: “Jesus wants to be raised on high, there: in the noise of the factories and workshops, in the silence of libraries, in the loud clamor of the streets, in the stillness of the fields, in the intimacy of the family, in crowded gatherings, in stadiums... Wherever there is a Christian striving to lead an honorable life, he should, with his love, set up the Cross of Christ, who attracts all things to Himself.”

In this scene we see clearly the infinite zeal for souls that burns in

Jesus' priestly Heart. His Heart is enkindled with the longing to save and sanctify all men and women, and any concern about his own suffering is overcome by his eagerness to give glory to his heavenly Father: "Glorify thy name!" – which draws forth from the Father a loving response that is heard by everyone. The scene also anticipates Jesus' prayer and agony in the Garden of Gethsemane that will soon take place.

We Christians need to resemble Christ, fostering in our hearts the same sentiments he had in his merciful Heart (cf. *Phil* 2:5). "With this priestly soul, which I ask God to grant all of you," Saint Josemaria said, "you have to see to it that in the midst of your daily occupations, your entire life is turned into a continual praise of God: constant prayer and reparation, petition and sacrifice for all mankind. And all of this in

intimate and assiduous union with Christ Jesus, in the Holy Sacrifice of the Altar.” For in the Holy Mass, the renewal of the sacrifice of Calvary, we transform our life into an offering like Christ’s, filled with supernatural effectiveness and service to all mankind.

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