

**Twice Glorified**  
**5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent (B)**  
**(Jn 12:20-33)**

*“The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.”* In the Gospel, Jesus is approaching the hour of his death: these words are spoken during Holy Week, following Palm Sunday when he has entered Jerusalem for the celebration of Passover.

*“My heart is deeply troubled.”* Jesus’ heart is troubled as he contemplates the Cross which awaits him, and this disturbance deepens with each passing day, culminating in the agony of the garden of Gethsemane the night before his passion. Jesus is facing that curse which the devil brought to bear upon mankind, and which we remembered on Ash Wednesday as we began this Lent: “Remember man that you are dust, and to dust you will return.”

*“Yet what shall I say?”* We must all approach that hour, but how? The Lord proposes two ways of praying when confronting death.

*“Father, save me from this hour.”* The first approach is the normal human reaction, expressing the instinctive aversion we have for death. While death (bodily dissolution) is natural to the creatures of this world, death is not natural for man, who has a spiritual and immortal soul, and whose (spiritual) personhood exists in a (material) body. Death ruptures not only man’s personal being, it also ruptures his interpersonal relationships. It is a profound crisis of sorrow and grief, and therefore we resist it with all our power, and pray that it may be averted whenever possible. Jesus himself prayed like this in Gethsemane: *“Father, if it is possible, let this chalice pass me by...”*

*“Father glorify your name.”* The second way of praying is the distinctly Christian approach. In Christ, and through his passion and death, death is no longer the curse of Adam, but rather the penance of redemption. It is reappropriated as an opportunity for sacrifice, for self-offering. Through death, one is able to offer oneself to the Father; one’s death becomes the culmination of a lifetime of loving service and sacrifice. Jesus teaches in the Lord’s Prayer to live our life always from this perspective of praise through self-giving: *“Hallowed be thy name”* and trusting obedience: *“Thy will be done.”* This is how Jesus ultimately prays both on this occasion, and a few days later in Gethsemane.

*“Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will preserve it for eternal life.”* Jesus reminds his followers that the purpose of this life is not this world or its glory, which comes to nothing at the time of death. Rather, we must think always beyond death, and seek the eternal life to come. Through his own death, he enables us to live for something beyond death.

“*Where I am, there also will my servant be.*” Life in this world is therefore a discipleship of Christ, for the honor of the Father. As Christ showed by his own personal example, our lives must be dedicated to charity, service, and self-sacrifice. This love is especially revealed in the moment of death, when our sacrifice becomes complete. St. Paul will later echo this teaching: “*If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord’s*” (Rm 14:8).

“*Then a voice came from heaven.*” In response to Jesus’ prayer – and his life – the Father speaks from heaven words of confirmation and approval, echoing the words He spoke at the Baptism and Transfiguration when He said, “*This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.*”

“*I have glorified [my Name].*” The Father affirms that He is glorified through Christ’s mortal life and his self-offering on the Cross. But it does not stop there, the Father will be twice glorified.

“*I will glorify [my Name] again.*” The Father proclaims a second glorification yet to come. This is a reference to the Resurrection. The full glory of Christ is found not only in the sacrifice of his “lifting up” on the Cross, but above all in the “lifting up” to the right hand of the Father in the Resurrection and Ascension.

Likewise for the followers of Christ, we give glory to God not only by how we live in this world, but especially by the way we will rise in the resurrection on the last day. On that day, the full glory of our life, hidden now in deeds known only to the Father, will be revealed as it shines forth *in the flesh*.

Little is said in the Scriptures regarding the resurrection of the dead, and exactly what we will be like in the new creation. All we know is what was revealed by Christ’s own Resurrection: it is truly our selfsame flesh that rises; it is no longer subject to suffering or death, or even to the current laws of nature; and it bears the wounds of this life as trophies, when those were accepted for the glory of God.

“*Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies...*” Jesus provides an example from nature to hint at the glory of the resurrection. In order for a seed to come to its full glory, it must fall to the ground, die, and be buried. It must dissolve and return to the dust, and thus remain for a time. But then, through a miracle that is a marvel every time it happens, it will come forth again to a new and full realization. When we behold the wheat plant, or the bush with its flowers, or the great tree, we are in wonder and awe: how does *this* (plant, tree) come from *that* (tiny seed)? Only the death and decay of the seed reveals its full glory.

While in this life, we therefore need to pack that seed with as much spiritual good as possible, and pay little or no attention to material good. Death will end any material gain we achieved in this world, but death will unleash the spiritual good we accomplished. Death is by no means the end of our life, if we lived for God.

The Father is thus glorified when we live good and holy lives in this world, but He will be doubly glorified when we rise. It is above all on the day of resurrection that the Father will reap the full glory of our lives. On the day of resurrection we too will behold the full meaning of our lives, and those of others, as we behold their glory visibly manifested in the flesh. On that day will wonder and marvel, how did *this* come from *that*?

*“Now is the time of judgment.”* It is not just the glory of the just that is sealed by death, but also the corruption of the condemned. Those who die cut off from grace will also rise on the last day, but not to glory. Instead, the monstrosity of their evil will be manifested in the flesh: deformed, ugly, corrupt.

*“This voice did not come for my sake but for yours.”* Where Christ goes, his servants will follow. Christ shows the path to glory by undertaking it first himself, on our behalf. Everything he does is for us. Christ gives us today the distinctive Christian attitude we must have toward death. On a natural level yes we still experience the same repugnance and grief as all mankind; but through the grace of Christ we nevertheless accept and embrace this curse as a penance, trampling it underfoot (1 Cor 15:25-26), that through it we may attain the glory of God, and our own glory.