



AMDG
FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT
YEAR B,
21ST MARCH 2021



‘I will draw all people to myself’

OPENING PRAYER

By your help, we beseech you, Lord our God,
may we walk eagerly in that same charity
with which, out of love for the world,
your Son handed himself over to death.

As we journey through Lent and approach Holy Week, our Sunday readings draw us deeper into contemplating Jesus fulfilling the new Covenant by his sacrifice and death.

The *First Reading* from Jeremiah reveals God’s love, as he promises to make a new covenant with us, written on our hearts.

The verses chosen from the *Psalms* reflect this: ‘A pure heart create for me, O God’. We pray for a heart that will receive this covenant of love.

The letter to the Hebrews (*Second Reading*) reveals the cost of this covenant to Jesus, in all his humanity. His obedience is through suffering, becoming our salvation.

In the *Gospel* Jesus spells out the necessity for the grain of wheat to die. His soul is troubled, but he is One with the Father. Through the cross will come glory.

As his disciples, we must follow him, and so, like Jesus, may we turn to the Father in all our troubles, striving to draw others with us.

FIRST READING JEREMIAH 31: 31–34

See, the days are coming – it is the Lord who speaks – when I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel (and the House of Judah), but not a covenant like the one I made with their ancestors on the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. They broke that covenant of mine, so I had to show them who was master. It is the Lord who speaks. No, this is the covenant I will make with the House of Israel when those days arrive – it is the Lord who speaks. Deep within them I will plant my Law, writing it on their hearts. Then I will be their God and they shall be my people. There will be no further need for neighbour to try to teach neighbour, or brother to say to brother, ‘Learn to know the Lord!’ No, they will all know me, the least no less than the greatest – it is the Lord who speaks – since I will forgive their iniquity and never call their sin to mind.

I come to my place of prayer asking the Lord to give me the grace to hear his word and allow it to enter my heart.

I relax my body, and clear my mind, so that I may be attentive to his presence within me.

I read the text slowly: it is a formal proclamation. ‘It is the Lord who speaks’, is repeated four times.

What is this solemn covenant?

The Lord makes it with Israel, but also with each human heart, with me.

What is God’s Law for me?

In what ways is it the source from which my thoughts, words and actions flow?

I sit quietly with the Lord, allowing him to work deep within my heart, listening to him, knowing that I can do nothing without his Spirit moving within me.

Knowing too that I am loved and forgiven.

I may then wish to pray for my family, my community, my church, or the whole world situation, entrusting them to God’s abiding love.

Drawing my prayer to a close, I end with a *Glory be* ...

GOSPEL JOHN 12: 20–30

Among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. These approached Philip, and put this request to him, ‘Sir, we should like to see Jesus.’ Philip went to tell Andrew, and together they went to tell Jesus.

Jesus replied to them: ‘Now the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I tell you, most solemnly, unless a wheat grain falls on the ground and dies, it remains only a single grain; but if it dies, it yields a rich harvest. Anyone who loves their life loses it; anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves me, they must follow me, wherever I am, my servant will be there too. If anyone serves me, my Father will honour them. Now my soul is troubled. What shall I say: Father, save me from this hour? But it was for this very reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name!’

A voice came from heaven, ‘I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.’ People standing by, who heard this, said it was a clap of thunder; others said, ‘It was an angel speaking to him.’

Jesus answered, ‘It was not for my sake that this voice came, but for yours. Now sentence is being passed on this world; now the prince of this world is to be overthrown. And when I am lifted up from the earth, I shall draw all people to myself.’

By these words he indicated the kind of death he would die.

As I settle to pray, I relax, breathe deeply and perhaps focus on a candle.

Why am I here? Like the Greeks, do I wish to see and listen to Jesus?

I take the time to become aware of my desires, before slowly reading the text a couple of times.

I consider the little parable of the grain of wheat. How does it speak to me?

In what ways do falling and dying resonate with me?

Perhaps I miss something by clinging to the present.

I consider how can I be open, risk, learn ... and maybe bring life to others.

As I speak to the Lord about this, I also consider Jesus’s own pain, his consciousness of his coming suffering. I also see his trust in his Father.

How can I learn from this?

Once again, I speak to him from my heart.

I end my prayer with a slow *Our Father*.

Here's a text if you've only got a minute ...

Deep within them I will plant my Law, writing it on their hearts.

First Reading

A pure heart create for me, O God.

Psalm

Unless a wheat grain falls on the ground and dies, it remains only a single grain; but if it dies, it yields a rich harvest.

Gospel

This week's texts if you want to explore further:

Jeremiah 31: 31–34; Psalm 50 (51); Hebrews 5: 7–9; John 12: 20–33



'If anyone serves me, they must follow me.'

Gospel



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