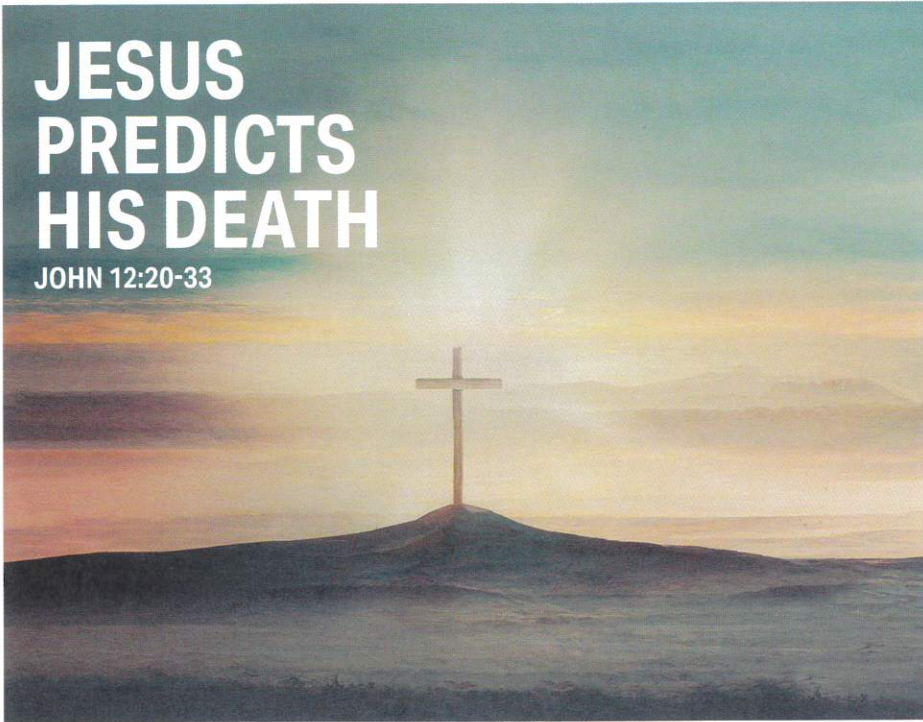


JESUS PREDICTS HIS DEATH

JOHN 12:20-33



We enter this Gospel story with a feeling that the inevitable is about to happen. Jesus' death is ahead of him and the hour has come. Pilgrims are arriving into the city for the feast of Passover, including some Greek converts who want to see Jesus.

These philosophers seek to broaden their understanding of other faiths, unlike the conservative Jews, who ostracize Jesus and seek his death. The other three Gospels speak of Jesus' agony on the Mount of Olives and how he felt great anguish and fear over his approaching death. We witness scenes of Jesus hoping and praying that it might be the Father's will to avoid such a violent death. But in today's Gospel from John, there is no agony scene. Jesus is troubled but he rejects the temptation to ask the Father to save him from what is to come. Jesus is aware that the pain and loss cannot be avoided. One scripture scholar notes, that 'there is going to be gain from the pain; there is going to be glory from the way of the cross.' The way of the cross, which appeared as a possibility at the beginning of the ministry, now presents itself as inevitable.

St. Paul of the Cross says, "The whole life of Jesus was a cross; the whole life of one who follows Jesus consists in this: to remain on the cross with him." In other words, to be a disciple means to love as Jesus loved. Once we begin to love, we open ourselves to pain as well as joy. Jesus' final courageous answer was a wholehearted acceptance of his heavenly Father's will. "Father, glorify your name!" – that is, "Use me as you will." ■

SAY

I arise today. Through a mighty strength, the invocation of the Trinity, through belief in the Threeness, through confession of the Oneness of the Creator of creation.

LEARN

'I bind myself today, the power of the Incarnation of Christ, and of his Baptism, the power of the Crucifixion, and of his Burial, the power of the Resurrection and Ascension.'
(St. Patrick)

DO

Next Sunday is Passion Sunday. Read the Gospel of the Passion on your own this week, taking time to reflect on the meaning of Christ's passion in our lives.



REFLECT

Such a powerful Gospel reading is accompanied by an equally powerful Saint, as around the world, we celebrate the life and work of St. Patrick, Patron Saint of Ireland. His life story is familiar to us. He is captured and brought to Ireland as a slave and as we read from his writings, he was a courageous, strong and holy man. Patrick knew first hand the strength, comfort and consolation that comes from Christ, indeed some of these characteristics are evident in John's Gospel. Archbishop Dermot Farrell, Archbishop of

Dublin, gives a contemporary account of how Patrick can be relevant and indeed a guiding force for our Church of today. He states that our faith makes a difference, despite everything we've been through as a Church with COVID, declining attendances and a falloff in vocations. Our faith and its practice continue to make a difference, and for the Christian, Christ makes a difference. "This is why Patrick came to proclaim, 'Chríost Liom, Chríost romham – Christ be with me, Christ before me, Christ on my right, Christ on my left. Faith and the communal

celebration of faith make a difference to people. The spiritual and the human go hand in hand." We take the missionary spirit of St. Patrick as our help and guide. Patrick knew troubled times but his strength of vocation and his zeal for the faith rested on an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. Patrick also recognised that Christ is alive in the community where his healing touch is felt and where his words of comfort and consolation are heard. ■

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Give me justice, O God,
and plead my cause against a nation that is
faithless.

From the deceitful and cunning rescue me,
for you, O God, are my strength.

COLLECT

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.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the
Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING

Jeremiah 31:31-34

A reading from the prophet Jeremiah.

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.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 50 (51):3-4,12-15

Response:

A pure heart create for me, O God.

1. Have mercy on me, God, in your kindness.
In your compassion blot out my offence.
O wash me more and more from my guilt
and cleanse me from my sin. **(R.)**
2. A pure heart create for me, O God,
put a steadfast spirit within me.
Do not cast me away from your presence,
nor deprive me of your holy spirit. **(R.)**
3. Give me again the joy of your help;
with a spirit of fervour sustain me,
that I may teach transgressors your ways
and sinners may return to you. **(R.)**

SECOND READING

Hebrews 5:7-9

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

During his life on earth, Christ offered up
prayer and entreaty, aloud and in silent tears,
to the one who had the power to save him out
of death, and he submitted so humbly that his
prayer was heard. Although he was Son, he
learnt to obey through suffering; but having
been made perfect, he became for all who obey
him the source of eternal salvation.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Glory to you, O Christ, you are the Word of
God!

If a man serves me, says the Lord, he must
follow me;

Wherever I am, my servant will be there too.

Glory to you, O Christ, you are the Word of
God!

GOSPEL

John 12:20-30

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
John.

Among those who went up to worship at the
festival were some Greeks. These approached
Philip, who came from Bethsaida in Galilee,
and put this request to him, 'Sir, we should like
to see Jesus.' Philip went to tell Andrew, and
Andrew and Philip together 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 his life loses it;
anyone who hates his life in this world
will keep it for the eternal life.

If a man serves me, he must follow me,
wherever I am, my servant will be there too.
If anyone serves me, my Father will honour him.

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 men to myself.'
By these words he indicated the kind of death
he would die.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

**I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,**

(all bow during the next two lines)

**who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
Jesus was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the
Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living
and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,**

**the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting.
Amen.**

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Hear us, almighty God,
and, having instilled in your servants
the teachings of the Christian faith,
graciously purify them
by the working of this sacrifice.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**Amen, Amen I say to you: Unless a grain of
wheat
falls to the ground and dies, it remains a
single grain.
But if it dies, it bears much fruit.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

We pray, almighty God,
that we may always be counted among the
members of Christ,
in whose Body and Blood we have communion.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.
Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE PEOPLE

Bless, O Lord, your people,
who long for the gift of your mercy,
and grant that what, at your prompting, they
desire
they may receive by your generous gift.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Lent is like a long 'retreat' during which
we can turn back into ourselves and listen
to the voice of God, in order to defeat
the temptations of the Evil One. It is a
period of spiritual 'combat' which we must
experience alongside Jesus, not with pride
and presumption, but using the arms of
faith: prayer, listening to the word of God
and penance. In this way we will be able to
celebrate Easter in truth, ready to renew the
promises of our Baptism.

Pope Benedict XVI