

**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,  
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**

Ps 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**

Jn 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 one God,  
the Father almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all things visible and invisible.**

**I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the Only Begotten Son of God,  
born of the Father before all ages.  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made, consubstantial with  
the Father;**

**through him all things were made.  
For us men and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven,**

*(all bow during the next three lines)*

**and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the  
Virgin Mary,  
and became man.**

**For our sake he was crucified under  
Pontius Pilate,**

**he suffered death and was buried,  
and rose again on the third day  
in accordance with the Scriptures.  
He ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory  
to judge the living and the dead  
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,  
the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son is adored  
and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.**

**I believe in one, holy, catholic and  
apostolic Church.**

**I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness  
of sins  
and I look forward to the resurrection of the  
dead  
and the life of the world to come. 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*

# Sunday Message

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

THE WORD

Year B • 17 March 2024 • Colour: Rose or Violet • Psalter Week 1

## JESUS PREDICTS HIS DEATH

JN 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. ■