

# Pastor's Letter

**March 17, 2024—5th Sunday of Lent**

Dear Church Family,

Our Gospel reading for today has some interesting similarities to the story of the Transfiguration. You remember in that story, Peter makes his confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Then Jesus tells his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem, be arrested, suffer, die, and on the third day be raised from the dead. After that, he goes up on the mountain with Peter, James, and John and Jesus' appears to them in all his heavenly glory and the voice of the Father says, "This is my beloved Son. Listen to him." Because Jesus gives himself over to the plan of the Father, the way of the cross, Jesus is lifted up in glory by God.

Something similar happens in our Gospel reading for today. Foreigners come seeking to meet Jesus and this triggers in Jesus an interesting response, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Amen, amen, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will preserve it for eternal life." It seems that the coming of these Greeks is a sign to Jesus that his mission of reconciling, not just Israel, but the whole world to the Father is about to be fulfilled and this fulfillment will come about through his death and resurrection, which will bear fruit for the salvation of the world. The sacrifice of his life is the seed that will produce a harvest of souls for the kingdom of God. And just as in the Transfiguration, when Jesus embraces the Father's will for him, the Father's voice is heard, affirming the Son's faithfulness.

Jesus reminds us that as his disciples, the call to sacrificial love is our calling too. "Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will preserve it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there also will my servant be." Wherever healing was needed, Jesus was there. Wherever the truth needed to be spoken, Jesus was there. Jesus calls us to lay down our lives and to go in his name into those places of need that we encounter in the world today. Like him, may we not hesitate to glorify God by lives given in love.

Blessings,

Fr. Scott