

BRINGING HOME THE GOSPEL

March 17, 2024 • 5th Sunday of Lent • John: 12:20–33

Living Life to the Fullest

Jesus talks to his apostles about his death. He tells them that he must die before he can be glorified, just as a seed must die before it can produce fruit. Jesus goes on to tell them that they too must die to themselves and to what the world considers the good life if they hope to share in his glory, his eternal life.

After Jesus proclaims, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified,” he begins to speak to his disciples about his death. He is telling his friends that when he dies, he will be glorified. His death marks the end of all his human efforts. It is the culmination of all his life’s actions. It is the completion of all of the little and big sacrifices he accepted. We find Jesus’ glory as much in a life well lived, as in a death fully embraced.

We sometimes get so caught up in the bloody sacrifice of the cross as atonement for our sins that we forget Jesus’ whole life was the Way. He came to his glory, as we will come to ours, by accepting all the little and big crosses of being human—including the cross of death.

Jesus is the Way because he embraced his life, accepting his human limitations and vulnerability. And we are asked to do the same. This does not mean we need to go out and put on a hair shirt or find some crosses to climb on. The truth is a person can’t get through childhood without a few crosses finding them.

It is extremely difficult to give up the illusion that we can control our lives. (Just try planning an

outdoor family reunion when you can guarantee no rain.) But that is what is asked of us. It was in accepting that last cross, a cross he begged God to take away from him, that Jesus finally came to glory. This is the paschal mystery we celebrate at Easter—the same mystery through which we find our own glory—a life lived fully and given freely even to death.

FAMILY RESPONSE

Ask each person to talk about the most difficult thing they had to go through so far in their life. Discuss what they did to get through it.

PERSONAL RESPONSE

What is the hardest thing for you to give up personal control of? What do you want to remember from last week? What are you looking forward to next week? What are your concerns?