

SPIRITUALITY

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

cf. John 14:18

R¹. Alleluia, alleluia.

I will not leave you orphans, says the Lord.
I will come back to you, and your hearts will
rejoice.

R². Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel John 17:1-11a; L59A

Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and said,
"Father, the hour has come.

Give glory to your son, so that your
son may glorify you,
just as you gave him authority over all
people,
so that your son may give eternal life to
all you gave him.

Now this is eternal life,
that they should know you, the only true
God,
and the one whom you sent, Jesus Christ.

I glorified you on earth
by accomplishing the work that you gave
me to do.

Now glorify me, Father, with you,
with the glory that I had with you before
the world began.

"I revealed your name to those whom you
gave me out of the world.

They belonged to you, and you gave them to
me,
and they have kept your word.

Now they know that everything you gave me
is from you,
because the words you gave to me I have
given to them,
and they accepted them and truly
understood that I came from you,
and they have believed that you sent me.

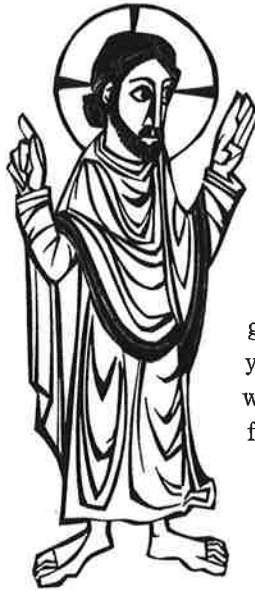
I pray for them.

I do not pray for the world but for the ones
you have given me,
because they are yours, and everything of
mine is yours
and everything of yours is mine,
and I have been glorified in them.

And now I will no longer be in the world,
but they are in the world, while I am
coming to you."

Reflecting on the Gospel

Sometimes we talk of the "glory days." Those are the good old times when everything seemed right. There is always nostalgia when we mention the glory days. We know that things now are not quite the way they used to be. There has been loss, regret, fumbling. The readings this Sunday point to glory days. They point to suffering and loss: "the hour has come" (gospel); "whoever is made to suffer" (second reading). The context of this gospel is the Last Supper. Jesus is praying for his disciples. For us.



The disciples, so often the beneficiaries of Jesus' instruction, are now the beneficiaries of Jesus' prayer for them. But his instruction and his prayer are part of his overall work that reaches a climax when he is glorified at the hour of his death and resurrection.

We who belong to the family of Jesus continue his work and share in his glory as we share in his death and resurrection. This takes us to the second reading which uses the word glory three times, but connects sharing in this glory with "shar[ing] in the sufferings of Christ." The multiple references to glory in both the gospel and second reading situate us squarely in this Easter season, yet in their midst we are reminded that suffering is the door through which we attain glory. We can never separate resurrection from suffering—interpreted as dying to self for the good of others. Taking up Jesus' mission can be dangerous, indeed! It means self-emptying. It means self-giving. It means suffering. No wonder Jesus prays for his disciples! Taking up Jesus' work means taking up his suffering.

Sharing in the sufferings of Christ, however, doesn't mean suffering for suffering's sake. Jesus suffered by his passion and death, yes. But the greater suffering Jesus accepted was to bear (the etymology of the word "suffer" comes from the Latin "to bear") the teaching and preaching, the healing and miracle-working, the fidelity to his Father's will that brought him to the cross in the first place. In all his life Jesus showed us a model for the kind of self-giving that persisted between him and his Father. The gospel is ultimately about the mutual giving between Jesus and the Father, and our being called into the same Life of mutual self-giving, and into their Life of glory. We are to give ourselves to God and one another in love and service. In this is God's glory and ours.

God is glorified by Jesus' work of salvation. Jesus is glorified by those who hear and accept his words, believe in him, and continue his saving mission. By our glorifying Jesus, God glorifies us and gives us "eternal life."

Living the Paschal Mystery

Our society glorifies being our own person and doing all we can to make our lives easy. This gospel and second reading make clear that to live the paschal mystery (Jesus' dying and rising) and continue Jesus' work means that we must be like Jesus and his Father in our own willingness to accept self-giving. Jesus' prayer for his disciples, then, doesn't make our lives easier, but harder! It's the share in glory that makes the choice to be a faithful disciple living the paschal mystery worthwhile. It is the share in glory that draws us to this dangerous profession of discipleship—a profession that invites us each day to put our lives on the line for the good of others. The divine Son is the visible Presence of the Father's glory. When we faithfully follow Jesus, we become that same visible Presence of the Father's glory.

Focusing the Gospel

Key words and phrases: eternal life, I glorified you, I have been glorified in them

To the point: God is glorified by Jesus' work of salvation. Jesus is glorified by those who hear and accept his words, believe in him, and continue his saving mission. By our glorifying Jesus, God glorifies us and gives us "eternal life."

Connecting the Gospel

to the second reading: This Sunday we are reminded that glory comes to us by hearing and accepting Jesus' words of salvation and believing in him (gospel) as well as through our sharing "in the sufferings of Christ" (second reading).

to experience: Too often professional athletes seem to be concerned only with self-glorification, preposterous salaries, and unbridled fame. This gospel makes clear that the glory of God is not about self, but self-giving.

Connecting the Responsorial Psalm

to the readings: After Jesus' ascension the disciples find themselves in an in-between time of waiting for the descent of the Spirit. They immerse themselves in prayer (first reading). We, too, live in an in-between time, waiting not for the coming of the Spirit but for the return of Christ in glory and for the full flowering of his kingdom. The second reading warns that if we remain faithful to Christ during this time of waiting we will be made to suffer for it. Because he is fully aware of what our waiting and our fidelity will entail, Jesus prays for us (gospel).

The responsorial psalm captures our prayer in response. We tell Christ that we believe in the "good things" he has promised. We tell Christ that we fear nothing, for in this time of long darkness he is our "light and [our] salvation." We tell Christ that we desire only one thing: to dwell with him and to know him more intimately. And we beg him to have compassion on us. For we know, as he does, the costs of discipleship and the dangers to faith that this long wait holds. May our prayer remain ever joined with his.

to psalmist preparation: The confidence in God the responsorial psalm expresses is couched in intimations of danger: "whom should I fear?" and "Hear, O LORD, the sound of my call." As the second reading indicates, the glory to be yours because of faithful discipleship will come only because you have first suffered for Christ. When you sing this psalm, then, you are acknowledging the real challenge of discipleship and asking for God's help in meeting it. When you reflect on this challenge, what makes you afraid? How does Christ help you with this fear?

ASSEMBLY & FAITH-SHARING GROUPS

- I see God's glory when . . . in . . . through . . .
- The words of Jesus I hear are . . . Those I accept are . . . I believe when . . .
- My self-giving gives God glory in that . . .

PRESIDERS

The specific ways I continue Jesus' mission and give him glory are . . .

DEACONS

My serving others brings them glory when . . . this is God's glory because . . .

HOSPITALITY MINISTERS

My hospitality welcomes and directs the assembly toward the work of glorifying God by . . .

MUSIC MINISTERS

I am most aware of glorifying Jesus in my music ministry when . . . What sometimes gets in the way of my glorifying Jesus is . . .

ALTAR MINISTERS

The kind of self-giving to which my serving at the altar calls me is . . .

LECTORS

My proclamation gives evidence that I myself hear and heed God's word in that . . .

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION

In my daily living, I share Jesus' self-gift to others when I . . .