

## Closing Prayer

All-powerful and eternal God,  
grant us so to celebrate  
the mystery of your Son's passion,  
that we may experience your pardon and peace.  
We make this prayer through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*Celebrating the Christian Year · Holy Week, Tuesday<sup>2</sup>*

Lectionary-based Catechesis • Year C

## Tuesday of Holy Week

### Principal Service readings

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| Isaiah 49.1-7              | My salvation will reach the ends of the earth |
| Psalms 71.1-14 [or 71.1-8] | My praise shall be always of you              |
| 1 Corinthians 1.18-31      | The message of the cross is the power of God  |
| John 12.20-36              | Jesus foretells his death and glorification   |

### Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,  
speak to our hearts in the stillness,  
keep us steadfast in the foundation that cannot be shaken,  
lift up our eyes to behold the vision of your glory;  
and perfect our faith, now and always. Amen.

Society of Saint Francis

### Gospel Reading

#### *Jesus foretells his death and glorification*

<sup>20</sup>Among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. <sup>21</sup>They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, 'Sir, we wish to see Jesus.' <sup>22</sup>Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. <sup>23</sup>Jesus answered them, 'The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. <sup>24</sup>Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. <sup>25</sup>Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. <sup>26</sup>Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honour.

<sup>27</sup>'Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say – "Father, save me from this hour"? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. <sup>28</sup>Father, glorify your name.' Then a voice came from heaven, 'I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.' <sup>29</sup>The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, 'An angel has spoken to him.' <sup>30</sup>Jesus answered, 'This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. <sup>31</sup>Now is the judgement of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. <sup>32</sup>And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.' <sup>33</sup>He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die. <sup>34</sup>The crowd answered him, 'We have heard from the law that the Messiah remains for ever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?' <sup>35</sup>Jesus said to them, 'The light is with you for a

<sup>2</sup> *Celebrating the Christian year : prayers and resources for Sundays, holy days and festivals, years A, B and C / compiled by Alan Griffiths. – 3 vols. – Norwich : Canterbury Press, 2004-5.*

little longer. Walk while you have the light, so that the darkness may not overtake you. If you walk in the darkness, you do not know where you are going. <sup>36</sup>While you have the light, believe in the light, so that you may become children of light.'

After Jesus had said this, he departed and hid from them.

John 12.20-36 NRSV<sup>1</sup>

## Comments and Questions

John reports that some Greeks had gathered to attend the festival (12.20). Their desire to see Jesus shows that the words of the Pharisees are true: 'look, the world has gone after him' (12.19). Since these are Greeks, they approach a disciple with a Greek name, Philip, who comes from Bethsaida (12.21), a town that is near to the Gentile Decapolis. They ask to see Jesus. For John the word 'see' carries a deeper meaning, to do with discernment and realisation. Their arrival prompts Jesus to disclose that 'the hour has come' (12.23), and he explains what it will mean for himself, for his followers, and for 'the Jews'. The gathering at this moment is the glorification of the Son of Man. The Son of Man has already been associated with a 'lifting up' (cf. 3.14; 8.28). Jesus is about to be killed, but the hour of his death is also the hour of his 'lifting up', his exaltation, his glorification.

The image of the grain of wheat falling into the ground is an image about the death of Jesus. The grain remains alone unless it falls to the ground and dies; then it is fruitful. Those who wish to come to eternal life must be prepared to lose everything and lay down their lives in self-giving (12.25).

Jesus turns his focus to his own situation and feels the terror of 'now is my soul troubled' (12.27). The use of 'now' links this expression with 'the hour' of 12.23. The hour of exaltation is also the hour of his suffering. Jesus asks the Father to bring him through the hour, and to glorify the Father's name (12.27-28). Jesus is central to the story but he is also completely dependent on the Father. Jesus' prayer is met by the Father's answer. A voice comes from heaven, assuring the hearers about what has happened and what is about to happen. Throughout the ministry of

Jesus the Father has been glorified; and this will continue into the future (12.28).

Another moment of revelation occurs when Jesus speaks of the judgement of the world (12.31). The very presence of Jesus brings judgement (see 3.19; 5.22, 24, 27, 30; 8.16), and the hour of the glorification of the Son of Man is the culminating moment of judgement for the prince of this world. So the hour of the Son of Man marks the casting out of this ruler (12.31). In contrast to the defeated ruler of this world, when the Son of Man is lifted up from the earth he will draw everyone to himself (12.32). The children of God who are scattered will be gathered together (11.50-52). The narrator comments: 'He said this to show the kind of death he was to die' (12.33). 'The Jews' are not prepared to listen. They counter with the statement that the Messiah will remain for ever (12.34; cf. Psalm 88.37 Septuagint version). Jesus tries again to draw them into his understanding, referring again to 'the light of the world' (cf. 8.12), to insist on the uniqueness of this moment. The only way is to 'believe in the light', in order to become 'children of light' (12.36).

## Quotations

### 1

Man's thought is always of the punishment that will come to him if he sins. God's thought is always of the glory man will miss if he sins. God's purpose for redemption is glory, glory, glory.

*The normal Christian life / Watchman Nee. 1957*

### 2

You never know how much you really believe anything until its truth or falsehood becomes a matter of life and death to you.

C. S. Lewis, 1898–1963

## Related topics

*For further study:*

Belief; revelation; death and resurrection

<sup>1</sup> New Revised Standard Version Bible is copyright © 1989 Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.