

## Cycle B Fifth Sunday of Lent

### Reading 1 JER 31:31-34

The days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their fathers the day I took them by the hand to lead them forth from the land of Egypt; for they broke my covenant, and I had to show myself their master, says the LORD. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD. I will place my law within them and write it upon their hearts; I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer will they have need to teach their friends and relatives how to know the LORD. All, from least to greatest, shall know me, says the LORD, for I will forgive their evildoing and remember their sin no more.

### Responsorial Psalm PS 51:3-4, 12-13, 14-15

R. (12a) Create a clean heart in me, O God.

Have mercy on me, O God, in your goodness; in the greatness of your compassion wipe out my offense. Thoroughly wash me from my guilt and of my sin cleanse me.

R. Create a clean heart in me, O God.

A clean heart create for me, O God, and a steadfast spirit renew within me. Cast me not out from your presence, and your Holy Spirit take not from me.

R. Create a clean heart in me, O God.

Give me back the joy of your salvation, and a willing spirit sustain in me. I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners shall return to you.

R. Create a clean heart in me, O God.

### Reading 2 HEB 5:7-9

In the days when Christ Jesus was in the flesh, he offered prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered; and when he was made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.

### Gospel JN 12:20-33

Some Greeks who had come to worship at the Passover Feast came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, "Sir, we would like to see Jesus." Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Jesus answered them, "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. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there also will my servant be. The Father will honor whoever serves me. "I am troubled now. Yet what should I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But it was for this purpose that I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it and will glorify it again." The crowd there heard it and said it was thunder; but others said, "An angel has spoken to him." Jesus answered and said, "This voice did not come for my sake but for yours. Now is the time of judgment on this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself." He said this indicating the kind of death he would die.

*“Sir, we would like to see Jesus.”*

Here is the cry of humanity throughout the ages and even today. Consciously or, more likely, unconsciously we call out....seeking Jesus. During our Lenten penance and renewal, do we recognize the blessings we have as Catholic Christians? Surrounded by a rich tradition of prayer, art and music, many symbols and sacraments that guide us, they remind us and grace us with the real presence of the Risen Christ. Energized by the Word and by partaking in the Holy Eucharist, we then are better prepared to step out into the world to serve, and be His hands and feet, carrying His love and message of salvation to everyone we encounter. If we open our hearts to Him and earnestly pray, God loves us so much that His forgiveness and new life within us shine forth as He answers our call: *“Sir, we would like to see Jesus.”*

A few weeks ago my wife and I were returning from an out-of-state trip. My wife turned to me and asked, “what are you thinking?” I replied, “I need to go to church.” We had been to Mass that morning, but it was not that unusual because I was scheduled to serve at the 5PM Sunday evening. After a full weekend, I was also tired, but the thought kept at me, “I need to go to church.” Well I did go, and as I parked in front of church, a friend came out to the car to meet me. “Deacon Roger, can you help? A man is inside saying that his neighbor just died and someone needs to go to pray with his wife.” Well of course I could. So I grabbed the Book of Blessings, and off we went knowing Father Patrick was coming later. As I pulled up and got out, I met two policemen and the County Coroner... they couldn't have been more nice or compassionate as they explained that the man Al had died less than 2 hours ago and Kathy his wife was all alone with no living relatives. I went in to meet Kathy and a neighbor was sitting with her. We talked, and prayed, about Al who was 72, a former MD and now worked analyzing tissue and chemical samples for various government agencies. But then she explained

their life's work: for the last 20 years they had created film documentaries. First were films about the bears in the Great Smoky Mountains, but most recently about the families and the people who were displaced from Cades Cove when the National Park was created. The living room wall was filled with about 25 award plaques, but she was most proud of the many people who they got to know and who became dear friends as they learned their life stories. Al and Kathy were only half way through creating a 6 part series. And she was now worried that it would not be finished.

Let me explain how our loving and merciful God works in our lives so we can understand the reading "*where I am, there also will my servant be*" and how we can "*see Jesus*". That day He prompted me to "go to church" though I was focused on my own life, but He also sent many others to help: one a parishioner, who did not just call St. Brendans, he came here to get someone. Another neighbor who only knew Kathy "at the mailbox", came to sit with her. Compassionate police, Coroner and funeral home staff. A Deacon and a Priest...and a week later, many friends from Tennessee to share the grief of a woman who has no living relatives. And by the way, there also is a neighbor who works editing documentary films for CNN... Now if you think this is all just a coincidence, believe me you don't understand!

We are surrounded by the presence of Jesus and signs to remind us. As the Catechism 789 and 790 says: "Not only is [the Church] gathered around Him; she is united in Him, in His body." "Believers who respond to God's word and become members of Christ's body, become intimately united with Him."

As Jesus prayed in today's Gospel and God heard because of His reverence, so must we encounter Jesus through prayer. We will come to know Him, and He us,

as He becomes a constant companion in our lives. And as Jesus did, we must Glorify God....Glorify God with our lives! Know that His Holy Spirit is with us in good times and bad...be comforted...be humbled. We must call out consciously many times a day: *"Sir, we would like to see Jesus"*

But we cannot stop there focused inwardly. We must work to foster everyone's response to God's call...from the casual inquiry to the spiritual development of a catechumen. Are we an instrument of Jesus to others who say *"Sir, we would like to see Jesus?"* What can we do better? Instead of judging others, non-Catholics or sleeping Catholics, how can we respond to their needs and awaken them to see Jesus? How can we spread a passion for Christ?

When you and I see Jesus this week, will we be ready to respond to others calling *"Sir, we would like to see Jesus"?*