



Blessed Trinity Catholic Community † Spirit of Christ Mission

The Fifth Sunday of Lent -B- March 17, 2024

Jeremiah 31:31-34; Psalm 51:3-4, 12-13, 14-15; Hebrews 5:7-9; John 12:20-33

Hymn at Presentation of the gifts: [For the Sake of Christ](#). Ken Canedo. Published by OCP

Homily, Father Ed Hislop

The words echo through the generations. Perhaps we hear them in our own heart or in the heart of fellow travelers on the highways of life and faith: *"We would like to **see** Jesus."*

In another age, another time, the Prophet Jeremiah, brings insight and hope to this longing to see Christ, when he records God's loving and merciful promise: *"I will place my law within them and write it upon their hearts."* This "relationship" with God abiding in the depths of our spirit and in the middle of our soul, is planted like a "seed" in the fertile ground of our heart and spirit, and from there we begin to "see Jesus."

The "seed" planted not just in one person, not just in you or just in me, or just in special or saintly persons, but in a *community* of people, a holy communion of persons, strong and graced, immersed in **trails** and difficulties, **weak** and **powerless**, saints and sinners. In other words, planted within us! The seed planted in the rich soil of the loving and broken human heart—a sprouting seed which grows and flourishes so that, as Jeremiah reminds us, *"No longer will they have need to teach their friends and relatives to know the Lord, all from the least to the greatest shall know me.... for I will forgive their evil doing and remember their sin no more!"* We would like to "see Jesus," but "to see Jesus" we need to look, and we need to look everywhere, even in the places of "evildoing!"

God, like a seed, planted in our heart; forgets our sin and weakness, but waits for the seeds of judgement and the wounds of "evildoing" to fall to the ground and die. God remembers, at the same time, the bound, oppressed, hungry, homeless, wounded, and the victims of today's "evildoing" of hatred, revenge, and war. Look there to see Jesus! The grain of hope and justice is planted in the good soil of their heart this very day.

This "seed," God plants, is watered in Baptism, fertilized with the sweet oil of the Spirit and nourished with the Food and Drink of Eucharist. That seed planted is Christ! The "grain of wheat" buried in the ground of our flesh is Christ! This Christ, falling into the soil of our bodies into the depths of our being takes root in the heart, the place God dwells. In the soil of our heart and life, soul and spirit, the grain of Christ is transformed, producing the fruit of unimagined possibilities, a new field of hope and communion, a new spirit of life, where Christ can be seen. The good growth, when watered with justice and cared for with truth, chokes the weeds of war, hatred, and judgement. As the good seed grows it opens eyes and ears, changes hearts and minds so that voices are bravely raised, truth told so that those bound unjustly are released; the oppressed freed, the hungry fed, wounds healed, war stopped and killing ended. When those works are sought and even demanded, when that vision begins to be fulfilled, then the wounds of the human heart and the human family begin to be healed, the

fruit of the grain begins to flourish, and the gift of joy is felt, and Jesus is seen.

Nurturing such growth, caring for the grain of Christ, and “seeing him” planted deep in the soil of the human spirit does not come easy, nor does the harvest appear quickly. Still there are the clouds of regret and pain; still the heavy cross is carried; still the innocent suffer; still growth seems slow; still it is a challenge to “see Christ.” Caring for the grain, trusting in the promise, enduring the darkness of these days, is reflected with these words of an unknown Irish poet:

“I wish you not a path devoid of clouds; nor a life on a bed of roses; I wish you not that you might never feel regret, nor that you should never feel pain. No, that is not my wish for you.

My wish for you is this: that you might be brave in times of trial when others lay crosses upon your shoulders; when mountains must be climbed, and chasms are to be crossed; when hope scarcely can shine through.

My wish for you is that every gift God gave you might grow along with you and let you give the gift of joy to all who care for you. One more wish I have for you: that in every hour of joy and pain you may feel God close to you.

This is my wish for you and for all who care for you. This is my hope for you now and forever.”

Waiting for the seed to produce much fruit, “we would like see Jesus,” so we will sing from the heart: “For the sake of Christ, I willingly accept my weakness and my trials, for when I am powerless, then I am strong.” THEN WE SEE JESUS.

