

Reflection for Holy Tuesday.

In our readings from John we encounter Jesus' final teaching to his disciples. They are gathered in Jerusalem for the Passover and other teaching and events in the synoptic gospels appear here. There is much in this passage that draws together themes we have thought about in our series in Epiphany and on Identity. In this long and involved passage, I wonder if, as you read it through lines jump out you that echo what we have looked at in the past few months. *Read John 12: 20-33*

Seeing

Let's start at the beginning. Some Greeks arrive on the scene, find Philip, and make one of the most extraordinary requests of the entire Gospel, "we want to see Jesus." Perhaps repeat that phrase to yourself a couple of times. Try putting 'I' instead of 'we' and then go back to 'we'.

Isn't that the request of hearts? All the time, but perhaps most particularly now or at another time when we are thrown off course or confused? We want to see Jesus, not just hear about him but to truly encounter, and in that encounter to know, to understand, to have a spirituality that is authentic and real.

We want to see Jesus, maybe we feel that sometimes we do, and sometimes we don't. And there is no promise that it will be easy, far from it. In this passage, it is heart-breakingly difficult to follow Jesus, it is likened to be seed that dies, bearing much fruit means losing one's life. This is not done easily or thoughtlessly. As individuals and as a community we know how hard it can be to follow Jesus. I wonder what feels hard just now.

Hearing

Jesus considers and rejects a prayer like that prayed in Gethsemane. He opts instead for the prayer, "Father, glorify your name," and he hears in reply, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again."

In John's gospel, Father and Son are always on the same page; if you have seen one, you have seen and know the other. The glory of each is the love that they share, the same love that Jesus shares as he washes the disciples' feet, the same love that he shows as he lays down his life and as he draws all people to himself.

The problem is the people think the voice is thunder, or maybe an angel. They do not recognize that it is the voice of God and they do not know that it is for their benefit. The Father is bearing witness to the Son and it is mostly missed. There is so much noise in 21st Century life if can be so easy to miss what God is saying. Perhaps one of the gifts of times like this, when we are both shaken and calm, is that possibly the noise is less, I wonder what you hear in the quiet.

Lifted up

Whatever we have heard or not heard; these verses offer hope to all – the whole world! Jesus will be lifted up: as the result of his crucifixion (lifted up on a cross); his resurrection (lifted up from death) and his ascension (lifted up from the earth to return to the Father).

Take a moment, lift your hands and imagine Jesus lifted on the cross. Let your hands fall and lift them again, as you imagine Jesus, lifted from the tomb to stand in the garden. And lastly, lift your hands as Jesus joins the eternal song of heaven. Seeing, knowing, encountering this Jesus, particularly at times of uncertainty, gives draw us into this hope of what was, and is and is to come. I prayer this will be true for all of us this Tuesday of Holy Week, Amen.