

To better understand the Gospel we just heard, it's good to know the context of this passage. Jesus had been busy preaching His message, performing signs, and calling people to follow him. Not so long ago he brought back to life his friend Lazarus. The result of this sign was that as more people were talking about Jesus and were wondering whether he was the expected Messiah, the religious authorities were more and more concerned about Jesus, his teaching and his fame as more and more people were on their way to Jerusalem to celebrate the festival of Passover. John tells us that after Lazarus' resurrection the chief priests and the Pharisees decided to kill Jesus (11:53) and Jesus had to find a safe place. A week before Passover Jesus was in Bethany with Lazarus and his family. Crowds came to see Jesus and also to see Lazarus. More people now believed in Jesus because they saw Lazarus, so the religious authorities planned to put Lazarus to death as well. (12:11)

The following day, Jesus entered Jerusalem, with crowds cheering as they followed him with branches. The Jewish religious and political authorities were scared, as Pharisees told each other, "Look, the world has gone after him." (12:20)

As an echo to the Pharisees' words, some Greeks found Philip with a simple but profound question: "Sir, we want to see Jesus." In John the words are important and most of the time have deeper meaning than we think at first. They want to see Jesus; they want to know him. This is not just simple curiosity; they have a spiritual quest. And at that moment we can already perceive that Jesus' mission is about to take a new dimension. These Greeks anonymous people represent the Gentiles; they represent those who are not officially part of the people of God. They stand in opposition with Israel religious leadership who want to take Jesus' life because they feel threatened by Him. The Greeks want to see Jesus, they want to know him, they are curious and they already perceive that only Jesus can fulfill their deepest spiritual aspirations.

Apparently, Philipp and Andrew, the only two disciples with Greek names have no idea how to answer the question, so they turn to Jesus, and Jesus then knows for sure that his hour has come. He came to save all people. He came to bring to God all nations. Already Gentiles are coming to Him. His hour has come. But what hour? In John's Gospel the theme of Jesus' hour is present from the beginning to the end. This hour is the moment when Jesus will be glorified.

Let us pause for a moment. What does glory mean? According to the dictionary, glory is about beauty, delight, splendor, but also praise and worship offered to a god. So, to be glorified is something greatly positive. But here Jesus is talking about his

death, and a very gruesome death on a cross. How being lifted up on a cross can be synonymous to being glorified? How being crucified can be synonymous with being glorified?

Once again John helps us to understand that we need to look into the reality with different lenses, especially when concerning Jesus. There is always more than what we can see or understand at first. In John, Jesus equates his crucifixion as the ultimate sign of who he is: the Son of God who came to give his life for all human beings out of love. More importantly, the inevitable death that will occur after the crucifixion is not and cannot be the last word of Jesus. Next week we will enter Holy Week. We will follow Jesus from his triumphant entrance in Jerusalem to his cross, death, and his glorious resurrection on Easter morning. Easter's triumph is already present at Calvary. The Resurrection could not have happened without the death of Jesus first. In this sense, the crucifixion in itself is already a glorification. The crucifixion already bears the fruits of the resurrection. Maybe it's made clearer with Jesus' image of the grain which needs to die in order to bear much fruits.

The hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified, but this glorification begins with Jesus' rejection and suffering. And Jesus is well aware of what is laying in front of him. He knows that this glorification, this sign given to us, the revelation of his true nature, is going to be costly and unbearable. After reminded that if we want to serve Him, we need first to follow him, Jesus will share his inner feelings with those around him: *Now my soul is troubled*. At first point, knowing what is going to happen, Jesus is frightened. And we can easily understand why. But he knows that this will be the final action of his human life, he did not come to do his will, but to do his father's will. He came to glorify his Father; he came to reconcile us with his father and with each other. The name of the father will be glorified in the death and resurrection of the Son, as it has been glorified throughout all of Jesus' life, teaching, and actions.

People have seen Jesus, people have heard Jesus, many others have heard about Jesus and have seen what he did. And yet, the crowds, as their leaders are divided about Jesus and who he is. Some want to get rid of him, some don't care, and few are following him because they have seen who he is. As Jesus begins the last week of his human life, the opposition to his message and his person will increase by the day. People will be more and more divided about him. We can see this division at play after a divine voice echoed Jesus' desire to glorify his Father in pursuing his mission to the end. Some people heard only thunder when others heard an angel voice. Once again, nobody really understood what was going on, and Jesus had to explain that the voice was for the crowd, not for him.

Jesus' glorification has nothing in common with human glory. His glorification is not selfish but selfless because the mission of Jesus was, is, to restore the world according to the Father's design: there is no more room for the Ruler of this world. The victory is already won. Despite the aftermaths of what we can still see in our world, despite all the things that go wrong in our society, (injustices, killings, poverty, hunger, racism, bigotry, exploitation, wars and so on...) we know that Jesus has already won, and that a better future is not only possible but already offered if only we wanted to follow Jesus' way of life.

Last week Father Jim preached about the reading from the Book of Numbers and the snake on a pole made by Moses. All those who looked at the snake on the poles were healed. Today we heard Jesus saying, "*And I, when I'm lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.*" Now when we look at the cross, this is not only healing that we received, but a call to see and follow Jesus. When we see the cross, we can see the deep unconditional love of Jesus who wants to draw all human beings to him. I like to think that here we eventually have the answer to the Greeks who wanted to see Jesus: they just have to look at the cross. We just have to look at the cross to see Jesus, to feel his love, and to follow him in his way of life, a way of love.

What would you say if someone came to you and say: Sir, Madam, I would like to see Jesus? What would be your answer? Do you want to see Jesus? Look at the empty cross first. Feel his presence. Feel his love, and then go and follow him in your daily life. Go and love those around you. Go and serve those in need. Go and be reconciled. Go and bring peace and justice where you live. To see Jesus, means to be in a relationship with him and to love as he loves each one of us: unconditionally.

Do you want to see Jesus? Maybe the ultimate question could be: can others see Jesus in you? Amen.