

19th May 2019 (5th Sunday of Easter, Year C)

Acts 14:21-27; Psalm 144(145):8-13a; Apocalypse 21:1-5; John 13:31-33,34-35.

'Now has the Son of Man been glorified!'

The gospel passage we read today takes us back to the Last Supper on the Thursday before Jesus' passion, death and resurrection. When Judas Iscariot leaves the room, Jesus, in an almost triumphant tone declares: Now has the Son of Man been glorified! Judas' departure from the room, to go and betray Jesus to the Jewish leaders, marks the beginning of Jesus' 'hour,' the moment of his glorification.

In the gospel according to John, the culmination of Jesus' life is the cross. Jesus says that when he is lifted up, for all to see, he will draw everyone to himself (Jn 12:32). The crucifixion is not a sign of failure but the banner of triumph; Jesus on the cross is the flag around which we all gather and find our identity.

The second reading from the book of Revelation, the last book of the bible, speaks of a new creation; a new heaven and a new earth, recalling the creation stories in the book of Genesis. In the first book of the bible we are told that God creates heaven and earth to reveal himself to us. The creation narratives tell us that what God created is all good – 'and God saw that it was good! Humanity is then introduced, which is itself 'very good,' and we are invited to freely participate in this creation. We recognise in ourselves a tendency to disobey God and do things our own way, depicted in the narrative of the fall of Adam and Eve (Gen 3).

The good news is that God never gives up on his creation. The bible describes how God immediately makes plans to restore what seems to have been broken. He continues with his plan to reveal himself to us. We see this revelation happening all throughout the Old Testament and especially in the birth of Jesus. The passion, death and resurrection of Jesus, God become human, is the culmination of this revelation; we are shown a God who is even ready to give up his human life in order to restore our relationship with himself. On the cross Jesus cries out: it is accomplished! The fullness of revelation has been achieved!

Jesus' resurrection brings about a renewed creation. In Christ everything is once again restored to its original goodness, putting aside the effects of our disobedience. In his death and resurrection Jesus has set aside all our sinfulness and now helps us to live fully the life of God within us. In Jesus God took on human nature so that humanity could enjoy the very life of God.

This mystery of the life of God within us does not start when we die and 'get to heaven,' as we often put it; it starts now, it has started already! The kingdom of God is with us and within us. After proclaiming that God has been glorified, Jesus gives his disciples a new commandment: love. We are asked to love one another to the same extent that Jesus himself loved us. This love – *agape*, love for its own sake – is the best image of God who is love (1Jn 4:8). We witness to God's glorification in Christ and in ourselves when we obey Jesus' commandment and fully and truly love each other on the example of Jesus. Jesus loved by offering service to his disciples, he even washed their feet! He loved us by giving up his life for us all, on the cross.

Easter is a time when we re-commit ourselves to this love which is God within us. When I love God is glorified in me and I become the image of God, I become God. Paul says in one of his letters: it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me! (Gal 2:20)

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