**Holy Week Tuesday 2020 (Isaiah 49.1-7, I Corinthians 18-31, John 12.20-36)**

“*Sir, we wish to see Jesus*”.

So asked some inquisitive Greeks to the disciple Philip, who has a Greek name so perhaps that is why they approached him. It is what we are all trying to do - see Jesus - and follow his path from temptation in the wilderness to his death on the Cross.

In Holy Week we see a significant change from Jesus being in control to being controlled– or so it first appears. The Jesus who had led people and events for three years now seems, in this last week, to be handing himself over passively to them.

First, he submits to the people and processes into Jerusalem on a donkey, seemingly more comedic than commanding. Then Jesus allows Mary to anoint his feet with the expensive oil that so angers Judas and sets his betrayal on course. Now matters are taking another entirely unexpected turn.

Jesus says the hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified, and all present surely caught their breath in excitement. At last, the all-conquering King prophesied by Daniel centuries before, and whose reign is to be universal and forever, is here.

To those listening to Jesus, Son of Man means the conquest of all earthly kingdoms by the armies of God. To Jesus, Son of Man means the conquest of the Cross. He speaks of sacrifice and death, since being ‘lifted up’ means crucifixion. Imagine their dismay and bewilderment when Jesus explains that glorified means crucified. What kind of conquest and glorious eternal kingdom can this be? It makes no sense.

John’s Gospel shows us both the tension and triumph in what Jesus says. It is a tension that turns into triumph. No one wants to be crucified and die an excruciatingly painful death. But real courage means being afraid, yet still doing what has to be done. Jesus has to face the Cross and accept it.

Jesus does face the Cross believing the power of evil will be broken once and for all. Knowing that the sight of his upraised and crucified figure will, in the end, draw everyone to Him. What came between the tension and the triumph? In between came the voice of God – only the third occasion we are told this happens for Jesus, and at another significant one.

First is his Baptism, when he sets out to do God’s work, and second is his Transfiguration, when he decides to go to Jerusalem and face the Cross. Now God’s voice comes to Jesus once again, surely strengthening his human flesh and blood for what he is to endure.

What God did for Jesus he does for each one of us. He strengthens us too for our own journey following Jesus to the Cross. A journey with the amazing and paradoxical grace of God who becomes for us sin and weakness; is wounded and killed, so that we can become His goodness, be healed, saved and raised to new life

“*Sir – we wish to see Jesus*”.

When our prayer is answered, God takes our tension and turns it into triumph too.