



Fifth Sunday of Lent



Prepare for your time of prayer by shutting out all distractions. Let your focus move down from your head, your thoughts and into your heart space, your soul space where God dwells within you.

Watch the flame of your candle as it flickers and gradually gets stronger. Let it hold your focus steady...

At this time of year farmers are preparing to sow the seeds for the summer's crops. In our gardens some seeds will have fallen onto the ground last autumn. Jesus reminds us in today's gospel that:

“Unless a grain of wheat falls on the ground and dies, it remains only a single grain; but if it dies it yields a rich harvest.”

How does a seed die? It has to sink into the earth and be pushed down by the wind and rain and snow and the feet of birds and other tiny animals and worms. There it gradually breaks open to release first roots, then shoots of a new plant. This is Jesus using symbolic language again, telling us a deeper truth through a familiar image. He is foretelling his own brutal death and resurrection but also telling us about the pattern of our lives. This year during the Pandemic many of us have been on a roller coaster of symbolic and in some cases real deaths. We have lost so much... **What image(s) would you use to describe the events of this year in your own life?**



Song:

Refrain:
Unless a grain of wheat shall fall upon
the ground and die,
it remains but a single grain with no life.

1 If we have died with him then we shall
live with him;
if we hold firm, we shall reign with him.
[Refrain]

2 If anyone serves me then they must
follow me;
wherever I am my servants will be.
[Refrain]

3 Make your home in me as I make mine
in you;
those who remain in me bear much fruit.
[Refrain]

4 If you remain in me and my word lives
in you,
then you will be my disciples. [Refrain]

5 Those who love me are loved by my
Father;
we shall be with them and dwell in them.
[Refrain]

In the 2nd reading, St Paul's letter to the Hebrews, he said of Jesus:

“During his life on earth, he offered up prayer and entreaty, aloud and in silent tears to the one who had power to save him out of death.”

In a very real way Jesus knew what it was like to beg His Father not to let him suffer. When we pray similar prayers, we know that Jesus understands, He's been there too. Like the seed he had to die before new life came. In our 'deathlike' experiences of Covid, we have no idea when things will feel different, when we will experience something life-giving again....and that can be the hardest part. **What is the hardest part for you? Have you experienced any signs of something new emerging from your ordeal?**

God of heights and depths,
we bring to you
those driven into the desert,
those struggling with difficult decisions.
May they choose life.

God of the light and the darkness,
we bring to you
those lost in the mist of drugs or drink,
those dazzled by the use of power
May they choose life.
God of the wild beast and the ministering
angel,

we bring to you
those savaged by other's greed,
those exhausted by caring for others.
May they feel your healing touch.
Christ tempted and triumphant,
we bring ourselves to you,
tired of difficult choices,
anxious about the future,
drained by the loss of a loved one.
May we feel your healing touch
May we feel your healing touch,
know God's presence in all things
and receive the crown of life
through the Holy Spirit of compassion.

Kate McIlhaga

