

Fifth Sunday of Lent

A grain of wheat

INTRODUCTION

After his triumphant ride into Jerusalem and before celebrating the Passover, Jesus spoke to his disciples about his approaching suffering and death.

SIGN OF THE CROSS

LIGHT THE CANDLES

Light the candles and read (*cf Psalm 16:11*):

Lord, your light will show me the path that leads to everlasting life, and as you walk beside me on my journey I will be filled with happiness which will last forever.

SORRY

As we listen to the words of this reading, let us ask for God's forgiveness and his help to make a fresh start (*cf Psalm 73:21-26*):

Sometimes when I feel wronged and hurt by others, I turn my anger towards them; but this is not your way, Lord.

I know that you will never let go of my hand, you will always stand beside me.

Gently you will guide me and with your help I will understand and make your ways my own.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

If practical ask one of the children to read the acclamation:

By dying you destroyed death and brought us all to new and everlasting life.

GOSPEL (*cf John 12:23-27*)

Jesus said to his disciples, 'The time has come for me to be glorified. Just as a grain of wheat must die to produce a harvest of many grains, so the Son of God must die so that many can live.'

Jesus was troubled because he knew the time for him to die was fast approaching.

'I could ask my heavenly Father to stop this thing from happening, but it was for this very reason that I have come.'

DISCUSSION

Why did Jesus feel troubled? – He knew that soon he would be betrayed by Judas and would suffer and die on the cross.

Do you think he was afraid? – No one likes to suffer, and Jesus knew what lay ahead of him. He must have felt afraid, but he did not try to avoid what was to happen. Instead he turned to his father and prayed for strength and courage.

What did Jesus say about the grain of wheat? – The wheat plant produces a seed called a 'grain'. A single grain of wheat can produce a plant with many, many grains. To do this the seed itself must die and give up its own life to produce a tall and strong shoot.

Many other familiar plants produce seeds which die so that they can produce new life. Can you think of any examples?

(Encourage the children to discuss vegetable and flower seeds which might be familiar to them. At this point show them the beans growing in a jar or the cress seedlings which were planted earlier. Let them look at the seeds which these plants came from.)

Jesus used the image of the grain of wheat to try to explain what would happen to him. Do you understand what he was trying to tell us?

Jesus wanted us to understand that like a seed his death was necessary, if new life was to be given to many. Jesus gave up his life by dying on the cross so that he could have new and everlasting life which we could share with him.

ACTIVITY

Copy or draw the various stages of the development of a seed from its beginnings to its final harvest. After the pictures have been coloured, help the children to arrange them in sequence and to discuss how the death of one seed can produce a whole new crop. Show the children the cress or bean seeds you prepared a couple of weeks ago. (*See Third Sunday of Lent*)

CREED

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus,
you willingly gave up your life
so that you could share
your everlasting life
with all of mankind.
Thank you for your courage and love
and for dying to save us all.



