

Reflection Thursday 5th Week Lent 2024

Jesus makes an extraordinary claim in the gospel that leads the Jewish leaders to want to stone him, 'Before Abraham was, I am'. You may remember that Moses asked God who he was in the brining bush and God said ***I am who I am***. This claim of Jesus is in keeping with the opening line of John's Gospel, '*In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God*'. Jesus existed with God in the beginning, before the creation of the world. He was before Abraham was, indeed, before anything had come into being. Yet, the Word who was with God in the beginning became flesh. He became like us in all things, except sin. While on earth, he remained with God. Although Jesus returned to God through his death and resurrection, he continues to remain with us.

As we approach Holy Week, Jesus continues to reveal his true identity. Here he declares himself to be God, by stating that he existed before Abraham lived, thus revealing his divine nature. This is another one of the great "*I am*" sayings of Jesus in which he clearly states who he is.

Hopefully, we feel the tensions building up as we move towards the crucifixion. Because Jesus made claims such as this one, the Jewish rulers consider him a very real threat to their power and authority. They cannot let him continue to teach and attract more and more followers. Something has to be done about him. Jesus knows that the time is drawing near, and so his teachings become more and more intense, straight-to-the-point and urgent....

Seeing Jesus walking away from an angry mob shows us that he could have walked away from his crucifixion at any moment. Jesus chose not to do that because of his love for us and his desire to fulfil the Father's will.