

Fifth Sunday in Lent, March 17, 2024

Scripture Reading: John 12:20-33

What you are is God's gift to you; what you become is your gift to God. —Anon.



A minister, priest and a rabbi — all from Ireland — find themselves in conversation one day. Their encounter quickly turns into a bitter argument. Just as they are about to do something really rash, there's a great thunderclap and a puff of smoke. An angel has appeared in their midst!

"God sends you blessings," announces the angel. "I invite you to make one wish for God Almighty to consider granting to each of you."

The minister jumps right in. "My wish," he says, "is for every Catholic to disappear from our lovely, green island."

The priest is infuriated by this; he responds in kind. "O great Angel, let there be not a single Protestant left on our sacred Irish sod."

"And what about you, rabbi?" the angel asks. "Do you have no wish of your own?"

"No," says the rabbi. "Just attend to the wishes of these two gentlemen and I shall be well pleased."

In today's reading, there were some Greeks in town for the holidays. They came to the disciples and said, "We wish to see Jesus." They don't say why; they don't divulge the nature of the visit. They want to see Jesus.

Whereupon Jesus makes three statements — none of which have anything to do with announcing a pox on any people, ethnicity or religion.

First, Jesus says that only when people deny themselves will anything good happen.

Second, if you want to find your life, you need to first lose your life. In other words, you must become part of something that is bigger than yourself.

Third, if you want to serve Jesus, you must follow Jesus. You cannot serve two masters. If you are going to be a servant of Jesus, you have to be all in.

It is not about being Catholic or Protestant, Southern Baptist or American Baptist, Missouri Synod Lutheran or Evangelical Lutheran, Wesleyan Methodist or United Methodist, and so on. Jesus said, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified" (v. 23). Indeed. It is about time, don't you think? Time for it to be about Jesus, and not about us.

—Timothy Merrill

Prayer: Lord Jesus, like the Greeks of old, I would like to see you, have a chat, a little face-to-face. I am weary of all the confusion generated in your name. Help me to remember the simplicity of being a follower of yours. Amen.

Daily Bible Readings

Sunday: Mark 14-16
Monday: Numbers 1-3
Tuesday: Numbers 4-6
Wednesday: Numbers 7-10
Thursday: Numbers 11-14
Friday: Numbers 15-17
Saturday: Psalms 29-30



QUIKUIZ!

Our readings this quarter have taken us through the Pentateuch, or first five books of the Old Testament. Test your comprehension by arranging these biblical characters **chronologically**.

- ___ Joseph
- ___ Noah
- ___ Abraham
- 1 Adam
- ___ Joshua
- ___ Moses
- ___ Pharaoh
- ___ Cain
- ___ Rachel
- ___ Ishmael

THE COMPLETE ALPHABET

Use **all** 26 letters of the alphabet to complete the following 11 words, but use each letter only once. Keep track of the letters you use by crossing off the letters in the alphabet below:

**A B C D E F G H I J K L M N
O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z**

1. ___ a ___ z
2. ___ u i ___
3. ___ u ___ c a
4. e ___ m p l e
5. ___ i o ___ n
6. ___ a ___ f u l
7. ___ r o ___
8. ___ e ___ a t
9. ___ a l a
10. ___ o l a ___
11. ___ o r c ___ p i n e

Try to Figure This OUT!

All answers end with OUT. Using the clues provided, fill in the spaces. Solution below.

		O	U	T				
			O	U	T			
				O	U	T		
					O	U	T	
						O	U	T

CLUES (from top row to bottom row):

- Water can opening
- Arrangement
- Rescue from financial ruin
- Brief fainting spell
- Reversal

ANSWERS: QuikuiZ — 7,3,4,1,10,9,8,2,6,5; **The Complete Alphabet** — 1. jazz, 2. quit, 3. yucca, 4. example, 5. violin, 6. bashful, 7. grown, 8. defeat, 9. koala, 10. molar, 11. porcupine. **Try to Figure This OUT!** — spout, layout, bailout, blackout, turnabout.

“Weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.”

—Psalm 30:5, NIV