

How God Is Glorified Fifth Sunday of Easter/C April 24, 2016 9:00 AM
Acts 14:21-27; Rev 21:1-5a; **Jn 13:31-33a** (The bread and the wine of the new covenant are likewise a new Passover meal that is to help believers of all ages to connect and become part of this new identity as the body of Christ.)

If you're like me, this particular story probably is as clear as mud. **“When Judas had left, Jesus said, ‘Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him.’”**

What does “glorified” mean, and what does it have to do with Judas, in particular Judas’ departure? Well, as you know, in all of the Gospels **Judas services as the polar opposite of Jesus**, and that’s especially true in the Gospel according to John. The mystery of God’s work on earth cannot be translated into terms readily comprehensible to worldly, cultural values and language. It just doesn’t work. **Judas represents and contains in himself a worldly-wise perspective that Jesus cannot work with or address.** That’s the problem between the two of them.

When a woman generously anointed Jesus with extravagant perfumed oil, Judas objected. “This could have been sold and given to the poor,” he said. Jesus responded, “The poor you will always have, but me you will not.” **Jesus’ ministry was directed toward this sense that he wouldn’t be there forever**, this very clear awareness that his ministry would come to an end soon. So he saw in this generous gesture something very personal and he deeply appreciated it. Judas evaluated the whole thing in a cold and impersonal way. He saw it as simply wasteful.

Now he has left the room and entered into the darkness. In a strange way, this brings relief to those in the room. We are talking about the **Last Supper**. This is one of the long discourses from the Last Supper. And Jesus says, “Now is the Son of Man glorified.” **For John’s Gospel God’s glory is pouring out his love and life, which culminates on the cross.** It isn’t that God likes suffering; God is love poured out. **God is extravagant gift of self.** This is exactly what Judas objected to: God’s extravagant spending of himself to unite himself to others, to bring others together into wholeness, into unity with himself. **Since Jesus is the Word of God incarnate, God is glorified in Jesus’ willingness to give of himself**, to give of himself in totality, which is of course the cross.

Earlier on, Jesus spoke to the woman at the well, and he told her the time was coming when people would worship God in spirit and truth. This is it. **Jesus is now worshiping the Father in spirit and truth by giving himself away for others.** What Jesus was trying to tell her

and what John is trying to tell us is that God really doesn't want our stuff, I daresay even our tithes. They are good; the community needs them. **People need your help, but God wants you.** God wants your offering of yourself. That is worship in spirit and truth, and it is the central meaning of **the cross**, and it radically changes human life. The fact that it happened once radically changes human life and human history. **It becomes a new paradigm, a new template for all people who want to become part of a new creation.** It's starting here on the cross.

We notice, again, that Jesus addresses his friends as "children." It would seem odd, except that this is at the Last Supper, a Passover meal. **Passover meals were for children.** They were a ritual that allowed children to be incorporated into the history of the people of Israel, to become part of it by listening to the stories and going through the various rituals of the Haggadah: the hiding of the bread, and the finding of the bread, the breaking of the bread, and the eating of the herbs, and so on. The point was **they had to become part of this identity that God formed among the people in this great event of Exodus.**

Now Jesus is transforming that identity into something else, something new: a new covenant in his blood, a new reality, a new identity, his blood poured out for forgiveness, to empower forgiveness, to empower love and mercy. That's the gift of himself. **And the bread and the wine of the new covenant are likewise a new Passover meal that is to help believers of all ages to connect and become part of this new identity as the body of Christ.** In other words, Jesus is initiating his disciples into this new identity. And he continues to do that with us, because we are never fully initiated into the body of Christ as long as we walk on earth. **We are always moving toward the goal, never quite at the goal.**

So **when we come to Mass** do we ask ourselves, what is God doing today for us? He is the one who invited us. The question isn't, why do we come? **The question is, why did he invite us?** What is God doing? What does God want? **Do we sense that God is leading us to a new understanding of who we are, or a new understanding of who God is even?** A lot of what people say about God is nonsense. We have to learn who the real God is. And that is the reason Jesus comes to disclose the very nature of God. **Do we realize that God is glorified in the outpouring of love in his son first, and then in everyone who follows in the way?** If we do, then we can see why this new covenant needs a new command. The first covenant had ten commandments. **The new covenant has only one: "As I have loved you, so you also should love one another."**