

Sunday, March 21, 2021

5th Sunday of Lent

The Courage to Sacrifice

“Amen, amen, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit.” – John 12:24

What does the word “sacrifice” mean to you? If you’re a parent, you likely know the meaning as you reflect on the sacrifices that you make for your children. You give your personal time and financial resources to take care of their needs. It seems like children are always asking for your time, your attention and for things. As they grow older, they become more independent. They make mistakes and learn, yet you’re still there to give them a hand. You give all of yourself in order that they may become the person that God has created them to be - a good person, one that cares for and respects others as well as themselves. This is an investment of your time that will benefit them and others.

In this weekend’s Gospel from John, Jesus shares that if a grain of wheat is not planted or does not die, then it cannot produce fruit. He says, “unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit.” Of course, Jesus was speaking of His life when he said this. He knew that His time had come and that He would give His life on the cross for the salvation of all mankind.

This is what God did for us by sacrificing His only son, Jesus Christ, as a ransom for our sins. Jesus was both God and Man, the great mystery of our faith, and in His humanity, He experienced many of the same emotions that we experience. He was fearful, yet willing to sacrifice Himself for you and me.

It takes courage and sacrifice to live according to the Gospel in our world today. In imitation of our Lord, we are called to give of ourselves for the good of others. Pray to God today for the courage and strength to do so. And if you haven't been to church in a while, now is a great time to come home in preparation for Easter.

- Bishop Gregory Parkes