

21 May 2023, The 7th Sunday of Easter: John 17 1-11

The words glory, glorify, glorious, give glory, and similar words appear 193 times in the New Testament, 31 times in John's Gospel alone. Today Jesus says: *Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you.* Of the disciples, he says: *...I have been glorified in them.*

Jesus' arrest is at hand. He is praying, with and in the Father, contemplating the divine desire for creation, for humanity. Jesus prays for the fulfillment of God's salvation in himself and in his followers; he prays that people be healed of their antagonism, hatred, isolation, and fear: that all become one in the Father as Jesus is in the Father.

At the beginning of his Gospel, John proclaimed God's Word became flesh, coming into our world of conflict, division, and violence—overcoming darkness with light, bringing people to the light, to one-ness with God. Some reject light and embrace darkness, but this will not thwart God's eternal desire. On the cross Jesus reveals not only God's purpose—salvation for all—but God's glory: Jesus' sacrificial self-offering does not merely cancel the consequences of sin; Jesus transfigures our sin into God's glory.

Just when darkness seemingly obtains victory, God's glory is revealed to the fullest: it is no longer God descending into flesh but the flesh of humanity ascending into God. It is no longer the Word who becomes a human being, but human beings transformed into the Divine Life of God. The Word of God, Jesus Christ, bears all humanity in himself to the Father. By, in, through and with Jesus we become God's glory. In our mortal lives, no matter our accomplishments or defeats, our tragedies, or joys, we are to live what we are in Christ. Near the end of the 2nd Century, Irenaeus, the Bishop and Martyr of Lyon, France wrote: "The glory of God is the human person fully alive, and the life of mortals is the vision of God."

Glory is the revelation of God's majesty, power, wisdom, and eternal Being. Creation reveals God's glory in the unknowable spread of stars, galaxies and planets spanning immeasurable light years, and in a tiny hummingbird, a butterfly's wing, a single molecule. Glory is revealed in the multitude of animals, birds, fish, fruits, grains, insects, microscopic particles, and tiny atoms. Men, women, and children, the old in their wisdom, nascent life in utter defenselessness, all mortals testify in the beauty of their existence to the power and greatness of the Word, for all things are created by him and for him, and in him all things hold together (Colossians 1:15-17).

God's glory is revealed in the stormy relationship with humanity in greatness and smallness: as the Red Sea is parted before the hosts of Israel and Egypt, and as Jesus heals a child in a quiet bedroom. As Jesus kneels to wash their feet, as he gives his body to eat and blood to drink, he reveals a God who becomes little to dwell in us, surge, and act through us, confirm his life in us and transform us into himself. Jesus' humble love is the glory of God even more than stilling the storm or raising Lazarus. Jesus' humble love in us—his love for all humanity, and our responding love for him reveal his glory; even our dismal failures in loving those Jesus loves, as we seek forgiveness and amendment of life, testifies to God's glory.

We give glory to God when we see, celebrate, and give thanks that all that is in us and in the world is from God. All that is, is pure gift. God creates and gives you to yourself and everyone to one another for the pure joy of it. God creates, gives, and cherishes humanity with incomprehensible love and infinite joy. Perhaps most astonishingly, God loves the unrepentant sinner with the same love as the great saint: For *while we still were sinners Christ died for us* (Roman 5:8b). We become the glory of God, as we bear the fruit of God's glory, as we make known the awesome, humble, passionate God through our words, actions, and thoughts. When you are fully alive in and for God's glory, alive with God's love for all, you magnify, you are God's glory.

Ask that you become ever more God's glory, shining ever more vividly in your life, in our common life in and through Calvary: that God's glory be magnified, our Lord Jesus known, worshiped, and obeyed, the Holy Spirit bursting from us in love and mercy.

Blessing and honor, thanksgiving and praise, more than we can offer, more than we can conceive, be yours, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, by all angels, all mortals, all creatures, now and for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.