

## Homily Tuesday in Holy Week

John 12.24

***“Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.”***

Now I am not a gardener, so when Jesus starts using gardening terms, I always feel a little bit out of my depth; but the one He is using today I can understand, but it seems a little bit strange talking about dying and bearing fruit. From my meagre knowledge of gardening, I understand that seeds look dead but when they are planted in the ground they grow once again and producing a lot more plants and fruit. But that statement doesn't seem to be answering the question that Philip and Andrew had put to Jesus about the Greeks wanting to see him. Instead of saying 'How wonderful, bring them here.' Jesus goes off at a tangent talking about seeds and plants, about life and death. Why? What is he talking about? All though this is explained a little bit further on in the Chapter, where Jesus states that ***‘when he is lifted up the earth, he will draw all people to himself’*** it is still a puzzle. In this statement about his death, Jesus is trying to prepare his disciples for what lies ahead.

In other words, if the Greeks or anyone want to see him, good, but if want to benefit from the meeting; they need understand why He has been sent by God and what he has been sent to do. Also, they need to understand what is about to happen to him, and what his death on the cross will mean for all human kind. What he is saying is, that only by this strange ending of his life, will the non-Jewish world, the world of the 'Greeks' (foreigners and Gentiles like you and me), come to gain the truest and deepest relationship with Him and with God, just as God had intended. They were not just go and see him, as they would any celebrity; they are being drawn ***‘to him’*** by the powerful love of God, and in coming to him, they are entering into a deeper relationship with Him and with God, which results in a new life, a life full of hope and love.

Jesus, in answering Philip and Andrew's question about seeing the Greeks, what Jesus was doing it in his own way using the metaphor ***‘of seeds falling to the ground and dying and bearing much fruit’*** was to point out to the disciples what must happen. By using this metaphor of seeds falling to the ground, Jesus is trying to explain how God's saving love will save the world, and the only way God can do this, is through the death of his only Son; and only through his death, can God's plan of redemption be accomplished. On the surface it will look like a tragedy on a major scale, but in fact, it is a triumph on a gigantic scale. It is the triumph of God's self-giving love overcoming all things and looking death in the face and defeating it. Death is defeated by Jesus voluntarily going to his death on the Cross on behalf not just the Jews, but the whole human kind, and this human kind is represented here by the Greeks who want to see Jesus.

By this time in his ministry, Jesus has realized that his time has come to make the final move: the time of preparation was over it was now time for action. His disciples had been instructed, people are drawn to him through his teaching and miracles, and are following him and living in the power of his love, now the final act of love has come and the liberation human kind is about to take place. The fact that Greeks (foreigners and gentiles) were asking to see him, here at the Temple in Jerusalem was a sign that the time was ripe. It is like the first tender shoots in spring, heralding a new beginning. So now, there was no turning back, the moment has come and God's timetable must be followed to the bitter end. Jesus will go forward to meet his death with humility, with love, but above all, in the strength of prayer, knowing that God is with him, supporting and caring for him all the way. Jesus is aware of what he is taking on, he know there will be pain and humiliation, he know he must suffer this for our sake; and for him the talk of ***‘seeds falling to the ground and bearing fruit’*** is one of the ways he can explain it to his disciples.

What Jesus is about to accomplish in his own unique way, by standing alone against the power of sin and death, and knowing that he can overcome it and doing so, he is setting the rest of us free. Jesus is also pioneering a new way, in which we, his followers and servants as we now become, follow his example, the example of a master, in giving our all for the sake of others. Perhaps this, too, is his challenge thrown out to us, his followers and to the 'Greeks' (Foreigners, seekers and non believers alike). That if they really want to see him, to get to know him and understand what he is all about for themselves, they must be ready to be like ***‘seeds falling to the ground and bearing fruit’***, and to be willing to become his servant and risk all in his service.

David Brooks