

Sunday, March 22, 2015 – Jn 12:20-33 – 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent  
(Trust Walk - “Die with me.”)

My brother called me this past Tuesday. He rarely calls. When I see his name pop up on my phone, I assume it is either he’s calling because a family member has died, or a family member is sick. But, this time he says, “I’m at mom and dad’s gravesite.”

**SCREEN:** [Image – grave]

This is a picture of my parent’s grave in Dagsboro, Delaware. My grave is just to the right of my parents. My brother goes on to say, “Good news, your grave stone is being installed right now!” My response to my brother, “Good to know. Just make sure they don’t put on the date of death just yet.”

I was then at my eye doctor’s offices this past Thursday and he spoke about the little girl that was hit by a car on 197 and died right near his office. And, then he told me about last weekend when he was jogging, a tree fell in front of him killing another jogger right in front of his eyes. These instances this week, and being in the midst of the penitential season of Lent and thinking about the Passion of Jesus Christ which we will hear next weekend, had me thinking about part of

experiencing Lent is to help us refocus on our journey of faith, and refocus on how to be living today in this life as we journey towards our eternal life with the Lord.

**SCREEN: Trust Walk [main message screen]**

Today we celebrate the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent with one week until we enter Holy Week, and two weeks until we celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord at Easter. We continue today with our message series called *Trust Walk*. We are reflecting on that our Lord is calling us to walk with him in trust. A *Trust Walk* with our Lord is trusting him to lead us where we are meant to go and being open and willing to make that walk as his disciples. The past four weeks we reflected on that we walk with Christ, we trust in Christ, we endure with Christ, and we are called to love like Christ. Today, we are reflecting on that we are called to...

**SCREEN: Die with me**

...*Die with Christ!* This past Thursday in teaching the 2<sup>nd</sup> graders in our school, in discussing today's Gospel, I asked what it means to *die with Christ*? I got a lot of confused faces looking at me at first, but one student responded, "that means to live like him." Another student said, "It's when we live our faith." Today we reflect on that we are called to *die with Christ*. That is, we are called in our journey of faith as his disciples, to give our very lives, in all that we say and do, for

him. To live God's will in our lives. Let us take a few minutes to reflect on today's Scripture readings and how they help us understand how our lives are meant to be lived for our Lord.

Before we are even conceived in the womb or born, each of us already are part of God's plan. In my theological studies at Catholic University, we often talked about how God's law is written on our hearts. We hear this in today's 1<sup>st</sup> reading from the Old Testament when our Lord says...

**SCREEN:** **"I will place my law within them and write it upon their hearts."**

...*"I will place my law within them and write it upon their hearts."* Have you ever been around children and they talk about God and you have no idea where they learned what they are saying? I have a good friend, who claims she is an atheist, and whose child had practically no exposure to religion. When her child was just a few years old, he started asking about God. He started talking about angels. She would call me asking "where is he getting this from?" Or, sometimes when I'm teaching the young children in our school, they will respond with something so much more profound and insightful about faith that most adults would never come up with. Our faith and belief in God, and God's love, is truly written on our hearts. But, it is up to us to accept it, receive this gift into our lives, and then live it. This

is not new to us here. I do not think you would be here if you didn't know within your heart and soul that our Lord is a part of you. So, how does this help us reflect upon how we are called to *die with Christ*? Let us look at today's Gospel that tells us what Jesus Christ was beginning to experience before he would be handed over to begin his journey to die for us.

Today's Gospel foreshadows the death in which Jesus knew he would experience. A death that would follow after he would be betrayed, persecuted, beaten and ridiculed before the very people he was helping in this world. We hear him cry out in today's Gospel...

**SCREEN:** *"I am troubled now. Yet what should I say? 'Father, save me from this hour?'"*

...*"I am troubled now. Yet what should I say? 'Father, save me from this hour?'"*

We see the very human side of Jesus. This sounds so familiar to when Jesus will cry out again in agony in the...

**SCREEN:** [Image – Jesus in Garden of Gethsemane]

...*Garden of Gethsemane*. These moments of Jesus' humanness in the Bible are some of my favorite passages. I think it is because we can so easily connect with him in these moments. We can understand our needs at times to cry out to God

wanting to be saved from the moments of difficulties and challenges in our lives that we are meant to go through. But, Jesus shows us here, as he will show us in the Garden of Gethsemane, even in his moments of agony, he will follow his Father's will. Jesus says...

**SCREEN:** *“But it was for this purpose that I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name.”*

*“But it was for this purpose that I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name.”*

Jesus will glorify his Father's name by giving of himself freely to the will of God.

And by his example, he shows us how to live.

After Jesus' resurrection and the Apostles started to evangelize and spread the Christian faith, the disciples of that time expected their hour, their end of life, would come soon. They lived their faith preparing to die. But, as history has shown us and the Bible tells us, we *‘know neither the day nor the hour’* when the end of our lives, and the end of this world, will come. We can become complacent. But, today's Scripture readings, and the meaning of journeying through Lent, is to prompt us and ask ourselves, ‘are we prepared to die today?’ That is, ‘are we living our lives of faith the way we need to be living in order to be prepared to meet our Lord if we were called from this world today?’ Simply put, we need to...

**SCREEN: Die to self**

*Die to self.* Our own selfish desires, our own selfish plans, must make way for God's desires, God's plans to take hold in our lives and become the life we are meant to live. That is, to realize in our lives the *Trust Walk* with Christ that is meant for each of us to walk.

If we are committed to living our faith and following that *Trust Walk* with Christ, then we can say...

**SCREEN: “The hour has come...”**

“*The hour has come...*” The hour is now in our life. With these next seven days of Lent before we celebrate the Passion of Jesus Christ and enter into Holy Week, let us recommit ourselves to a life of prayer, sacrifice and self-denial during this Lenten season. Here are some suggestions of what you might consider doing this week:

For prayer:

- Attend daily Mass here, or near your work or school
- Get to church a little early or stay a few minutes after Mass to pray

- Pray a few decades of the Rosary, such as on your way to work, school or the store
- Open the Bible and pray with some Scripture
- Receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation – This Thursday at 7 pm and next Saturday at 4 pm, both Fr. Mike and I will be available here in the church to hear Confessions
- Pray the Stations of the Cross – We have more St. Pius’ Stations booklets available this weekend on the tables at the doors of the church

As to Sacrifice and Self-Denial:

- Fast by skipping a meal one day
- Give up using your electronic devices for a day, or at least an hour or two
- Give up watching a favorite TV show one night
- And, with this extra time, do something constructive in service to others:
  - Visit a neighbor or friend
  - Renew an old friendship by writing a letter or making a phone call
  - Do some spring cleaning by gathering clothes to donate to those in need
  - Bring in canned good for the Sharing Pantry
  - Help with SOME, our archdiocesan soup kitchen in DC that our parishioners serve at twice a month

The key is make this Lent count. Seek one of the numerous opportunities to grow closer to the Lord during this Lent and seek opportunities to help others.

At the end of the day, when I say my Night Prayer and do an examination of conscience, I ask myself 'Did I do all I could today to serve the Lord?' Sometimes I can answer the question 'yes,' and sometimes the answer is 'no.' As we enter this last week before Holy Week, let us strive to do all we can to serve the Lord. Let us do this by focusing on the prayer life we need to truly hear the Lord and know His will for our lives, and let us serve the Lord by serving others that He is asking us to serve. Let us take our *Trust Walk* with our Lord, Jesus Christ, each and every day. Amen.