

## 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter, C

### My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

A very short gospel. This is the sum and the substance, why he came, why he died, why he rose, and why you are all sitting here today.

It is because he has come to show us God's glory.

The real meaning of the words **“show glory”** and **“glorify”** is not a kind of prideful superiority over everybody.

The Old Testament uses the word **“glory”** to mean the manifestation of the inner truth of the human being when we say, **“We saw his glory.”**

In fact, **“we saw his glory”** is used quite commonly and has the same meaning.

For instance, if an athlete, after years of ordeal and working hard and faithfully to what he has to do, runs the race and comes in first in the Olympics, and everyone says, **“We saw his glory,”** what they mean is that the inner strength of this man, in his discipline, in his wisdom, in whatever it is that drives him forward, is now manifested. He is not just somebody sitting around talking or having pizzas.

The real man is not just that friend or that person; the real man is the one who manifests at that moment a singular inner being that nobody knew existed in him.

I say this because the next thing Jesus says is...

When we talk about God's glory, it means that God will reveal Himself. He will reveal Himself, and you will discover who the hidden God is.

And Jesus is going to be the instrument of that. And how does he frame it?

You forgot the first sentence: **“When Judas had left them.”**

We are at the Last Supper. When Judas Iscariot leaves him, he will go to the Sanhedrin, the leaders, and he will say to them, **“I will hand him over to you.”**

And then the ordeal will begin, for he will walk out into that garden, sweating blood and full of fear.

Finally, he will say to his Father, **“Take this away from me, but not as I will but as you will.”** And the soldiers arrested him and put him on trial, and the next day they crucified him.

This, Jesus is saying, is the beginning of his glory.

This is his glory: nailed to a cross, everybody screaming at him, a total failure, everything that he believed in is challenged, everything he loved has deserted him and, on the cross, he looks down and he opens his arms, and he says, **“Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.”**

And what is glory?

The glory is that God weeps, cries, and feels humanity's pain. Driven to the end of that pain and suffering, he looks down and says, **“It’s all about love.”** He says, **“Father, I love these people; you have to forgive them.”**

The French poet says, **“From that day on, the two arms of God, one for justice and one for mercy, Jesus ties one arm behind his Father and says, ‘From now on, not justice; only mercy, only love.’”**

And now we have seen his glory. We have seen the glory of God on a cross before the whole world. **“God so loved the world that He gave His only Son into our hands.”**

And out of Jesus giving himself, his own life, out of that love, he heals us, saves us, gives us once again what we were born with: the glory God gives to every human being.

And then he says, **“I have just a little time to be with you and you must understand, you must learn to love, and you must love each other in the same way that I have loved you.”**

And it is God who has made every one of us capable, not of human love, which is so easily lost and battered, but capable of bearing the love of God as instruments of God.

And this is the new thing: God now marches, not above in Heaven, but He is always with us.

The love we show each other is not our love; it is God’s love. The forgiveness we give each other is not our forgiveness; it’s God’s forgiveness. And the caring we do for each other is also God’s caring for each and every one of us.

And so, in the end, on Calvary, Jesus dies. But death is not that important. It is the measure of God’s love and the love of Jesus. And it is

measured by the total, complete, unconditional sacrifice of his life that we might all understand who we are and how valuable we are.

And it is not because we do great things, and people will say, “**See his glory on the athletic field or in some other activity.**”

For the first time, we are revealed, our true value. We are worth the death of the Messiah, the Son of God, and God Himself has given us this great gift.

So, today, when we say we must love one another, he knows that we will fail again and again.

After all, when he said, “**You will see my glory,**” where were the men in front of him?

They ran away. It was only later that they saw it with their hearts. When they saw his glory, who he was, and what he was giving us, his love, they knew that he would become our way, our truth, and our life.

So, whenever you think of how hard it is to forgive, don't think, “**Yes, how hard it is for me to forgive,**” because it is a great weakness for all of us. The hardest thing in life is to forgive somebody.

And yet, think just for one moment: You are not asked to forgive with your own forgiveness. You and Christ together are to share the Father's forgiveness for all humanity.

And look again at that person you cannot forgive. Because you have not seen that he, too, is God's glory. For God does not make garbage. He

doesn't fool around with life. Each one of us has an eternal destiny and eternal goodness.

And you sit in front of whoever that person is, and you write a little list on a piece of paper. The first thing you put down is everything you are ashamed of and have failed in love.

And then you turn to this person and say, **“Can I not forgive him the way God forgives me, with a generosity of forgiveness, or must I insist, me refusing to give him my little forgiveness, when God himself has died for him and has died for me and forgives us all?”**

**My Dear Brothers and Sisters,**

Let us think of these things at the end of the Easter season. It is the only response to evil. It is the only response to this world, to its selfishness, demands, and arrogance.

The only response to that is Jesus on the cross saying, **“Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.”**

And he asks us to be part of that gesture when we turn to each other and see and see and see until you can understand why Jesus would die for that person.

And I am sure you would agree that it is in forgiving him that we take the first step to healing ourselves and healing our lives, and, ultimately, as a people, we can heal the world with forgiveness for all. **Amen.**