

All are welcome

John 12.20-33

Some Greeks have asked to speak to Jesus, aware of the buzz surrounding him. Their request is passed through several people before it gets to Jesus; but it does – no one is too much trouble for Jesus. Jesus then speaks about his death, using the image of a seed which must die in order to produce the fruit for which it is designed. He finishes by saying that all will be drawn to him – Greeks included!

Now read John 12.20-33 see p.2 for text.

A note on the passage

The message – that Jesus (God) is not just for Jews or any other particular nation or religious group: all are welcome! – is radical enough. What makes it more so is that to make this possible, Jesus must die and rise again. Only after he is 'lifted up' on the cross are all people drawn to him. What might we need to give up so that others may feel welcome?



If you are to welcome others, what are you carrying that may need to be put down?

LET go

The disciples had to let go of a lot of their ideas about how things should be, in order to fully embrace Jesus' ideas about God's kingdom and those whom it fully embraces. All of us hold onto things that reinforce how we think things should be. Is there anything you can let go of as a symbol of being open to embrace all that God has for you? For example, maybe you could give away some money or sell a possession to support people in incredibly difficult situations – probably the people whom Jesus would choose to hang out with, if he were physically among us today.

SIL_NCE

Silence can be a very helpful way to connect with God. One way to do it is by looking at a picture. As you look, really notice all the details and think about what's going on. What questions does it give you? What feelings come up? What might God be saying to you through it? We call this meditation. If your mind wanders, when you notice, just bring it back to the picture! Take five minutes of silence each day to look at a picture of Jesus on the cross (do an internet search) and meditate on it.



BAKE

To make fruit flapjacks, melt together ½ cup butter, 1 cup brown sugar and 4 tablespoons golden syrup. Stir in 2 cups rolled oats, ¼ cup chopped dried blackcurrants, ¼ cup sunflower seeds, ½ cup pumpkin seeds and ¼ cup sesame seeds. Stir well until all combined. Press the mixture into a greased baking tray and bake on 150 C/gas mark 2, for 20-30 minutes until golden brown. Allow to cool before cutting into pieces.

As you bake, talk or reflect about seeds and how their seeming death in the soil leads to huge multiplication.

PEOPLE WATCH

Take a walk round your local area and 'people watch' as you go; notice all the different ways that people are busy with their day. Ask God for fresh eyes to see them as he does, and pray that God would draw them in.

LENT GARDEN OF RESPONSES

Look at a picture of a sunflower. The head of a sunflower is absolutely jam packed with seeds. Each one potentially another plant that can grow until it too has a head full of seeds. Sunflowers can produce up to 1400 seeds per head! Think about how quickly you could multiply sunflowers! Now think about your impact on the world around you. If you were to positively impact two people, and they in turn another two each, how quickly would the world become a more positive place? This week, make it your daily mission to encourage someone in something they are doing. Create or draw a sunflower to represent each person you encouraged, and place the flowers in your garden tray or on your garden page (that you've been progressing throughout Lent).

