

## March 17, 2024-Fifth Sunday in Lent

### “One Single Grain” by Pastor Julio Romero

#### Gospel: John 12:20-36

As we all know, the Lord Jesus was a storyteller. He also used all kinds of illustrations to get his message across to teach the Gospel, the Good News of God.

Today in our Gospel we have a few of those illustrations: the seed that dies and bears much fruit, losing and saving one's life, being lifted up in reference to his death on the cross and at the end of the Gospel, walking in darkness and in light.

All this in one single Gospel, but let's not forget that this style of teaching fits well with John's antagonistic writing style. Death and life, losing and saving one's life, light and darkness, these are images that we find all through the Gospel of John.

I would like to expand on the image of the seed given in this Gospel, the part where the Lord Jesus says:

*<sup>24</sup>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. <sup>25</sup>Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. <sup>26</sup>Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.*

Now, think about this: a grain, one single grain, a grain of wheat so small that if I had one in this hand right now, you wouldn't be able to see it from where you are sitting.

It would be very easy to ask, what is a single grain of wheat in a bushel? Nothing. A single grain, a single seed is so insignificant that if one grain falls out of the bushel nobody would bother to pick it up or perhaps it would be never noticed.

Isn't that the way we see ourselves sometimes? Too small, so insignificant in a world of eight billion people? So insignificant that if we are not here tomorrow, the world wouldn't miss us, like we were never here.

Isn't that the way how the world sees us? Is this the reason why it is OK for the Russian military to go into Ukraine and kill people there? Or the reason why Hamas went to kill as many Israelis as possible in one day or two and then the Israelis went

on to kill as many Palestinians as they can in a war that doesn't seem to end? Is this the reason why the world doesn't flinch at the fact that thousands of children die of malnutrition in the world every day?

And the list goes on and on, and all because all we are is a single grain among billions of grains that the world won't miss once we are gone.

Where is the respect for human life, the most sacred gift God gives? Where is God's command not to kill, to love one another? Where is the value of human life that only God seems to see and to know?

The Lord Jesus said:

*<sup>26</sup> Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? (Matthew 6:120)*

In the middle of darkness and the conflicts and injustices in the world, it seems that the only one who sees the value of human life is God.

The world changes us. It makes us forget that each of us is special, each of us is not just a single grain in a big bushel of 8 billion people.

The world makes us forget that each of us has been created in God's likeness and image, which makes us sacred creatures, and as Christians we must oppose everything that kills and destroys human life.

Once upon a time there was a man who was against war. He got many people excited about his mission and built a large organization to speak out against the war. Eventually people got tired and gave up on him and the mission. He ended up standing outside the main government building with an anti-war poster all alone.

One day, a passerby, noticing the lone protestor, walked up to him and asked him in a challenging voice: *"Do you really think you're going to change the world?"*

The man replied: *"No, but I hope by showing up, the world will not change me."*

Brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus, let's not allow the darkness that surrounds us change who we are, take us away from our Christian values and pull us into its domains.

The Lord Jesus warned his disciples about this in today's Gospel when He said,

*“The light is with you for a little longer. Walk while you have the light, so that the darkness may not overtake you. If you walk in the darkness, you do not know where you are going.”<sup>36</sup> While you have the light, believe in the light, so that you may become children of light.*

We can be one single grain, one single seed, perhaps insignificant to the rest of the world, but if we carry the light of Christ with us, we can make a big difference and help others to see the works of God in their lives. And this is exactly what Christians are called to do.

This Gospel is a Gospel of illustrations and images, to give glory and honour to this Gospel.

Here is another illustration that contains the message of what light does. It is the story of an unknown electrician. It says:

As an electrician I was once completing the final lighting installation in a family home. With me at the same time were 2 other tradesmen, (a carpenter and a stonemason) who were also applying the finishing touches to their handy work.

When the young couple that owned the house arrived, they excitedly ran from room to room shrieking with delight at how wonderful the new stone fireplace looked and the beauty of the new kitchen cabinets in all their glory.

There was no mention of the lighting which enabled them to see the work of the stonemason and the carpenter.

It is the light of Jesus that enable us to see goodness, kindness, change and new beginnings in people's lives and in the world. A light that shines in each of us, and in a way, we are the seed from which the light of Christ shines for others.

Let's not walk away from that light because there are many, many who need it, who need you, even if we are just one single grain. **Amen.**