

**GOSPEL MEDITATION -  
ENCOURAGE DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF SCRIPTURE**

*March 17, 2024*

**The 5th Sunday**

**Readings:**

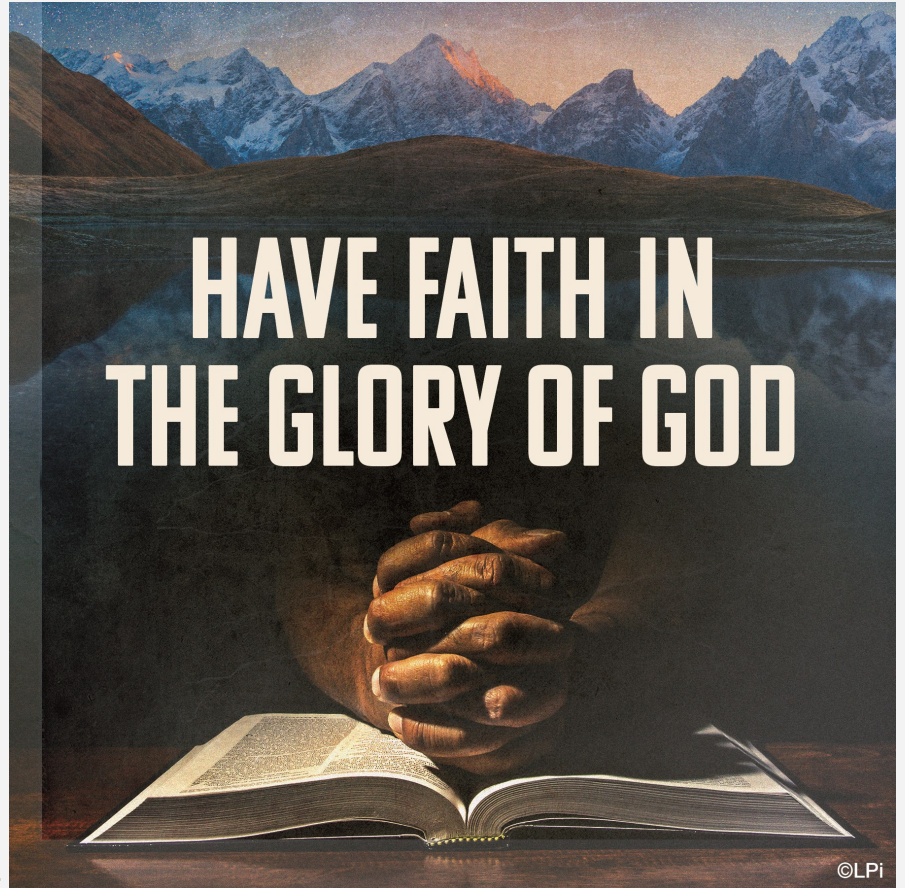
Jeremiah 31: 31—34

Psalm 51

Hebrews 5:7—9

John 12:20—33

A middle-aged woman sat on the couch in my parish office and recounted to me a shocking list of terrible calamities in her life: addictions, terminal illnesses, financial loss, broken relationships, and so on. She smiled as she did so. “Please forgive me,” I asked, “but you seem to be smiling as you share this.” She said, “Father John, I am totally overwhelmed. But I’m smiling because I just can’t wait to see what good things God does with this mess.” She expected God would manifest His glory when she most needed it.



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This week in the Gospel, God speaks from heaven for the third and final time in Jesus’ earthly ministry. It’s at a tough moment. Gentiles seek Jesus, who announces his terrible suffering, and then boldly prays, **“Father, glorify your name!”** John then writes: **Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it and will glorify it again.”** Was the task of drawing the whole non-Jewish world to himself overwhelming? Or was it the terrible specter of crucifixion? Whatever it was, the crushing weight triggers his turning to the Father with an unshakeable *expectation* of divine glory to burst through. And indeed, it did on Easter Sunday. In our burdens, our greatest strength is to turn to God and boldly ask Him for His glory.

**Lenten challenge:** This week, I invite you to list out everything which is a burden to you. Write it down. Then add these words: “Father, glorify Your name in all these things!” Put that paper in your pocket or purse when you come to Holy Week liturgies next week. You might smile at the most unlikely times.

— *Father John Muir*

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