HOMILY FOR WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16TH, 2026 / JOHN 12 - 2026

Our Gospel readings have been from John for some time, so you are likely becoming tired of hearing me say, remember the prologue. But there is no point in reading any part of John's Gospel without the prologue in mind. Secondly, when reading John's Gospel, it is important to remember when it was written – no earlier than the 90's of the first century and possibly as late as the 20's of the second century. Thirdly, it is also important to remember that although the author of the Gospel of John may have been Jewish, he was most probably a convert to what became Christianity and, therefore, by the time of writing he and the small community of Jewish believers in the Way would have been expelled from the synagogue. Finally do remember that the Gospel was written in Ephesus a sophisticated muti-cultural city populated by peoples of many different backgrounds.

With these four considerations in mind lets pay close attention to this evening's text. From the prologue verse 4: *in him was life, and the life was the light of all people* – emphasis "all" people. From tonight's reading: …*at the festival were some Greeks….*who said, *Sir, we wish to see Jesus.* Although we do not read of an actual meeting of Jesus and these Greeks, it is clear that Jesus takes the request as a sign that his mission is moving to a whole new level, beyond just the Jews to being a mission to the whole world. Unlike Jesus reaction in Matthew 15 when the Gentile woman asks him to heal her daughter, *It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs.* In John 4, Jesus speaks directly to the Samaritan woman at the well to her great astonishment. Later in the same chapter, Jesus cures the Royal Official's son at a distance. There is much speculation whether the official was Gentile or Jew. The very fact that it is unclear would suggest that in John's Gospel, Jesus is indifferent to the issue unlike the Jesus we meet in Matthew's Gospel. By the time John's Gospel was written, Gentiles would have outnumbered Jewish Followers of the way; and, of course, the Gospel was written in Ephesus where Jews and Gentiles could not possibly fail to intermingle.

Before we leave the Greeks, notice they did not try to contact Jesus directly. They spoke to Philip who spoke to Andrew, and then Philip and Andrew spoke to Jesus. This foretells the fact that when Jesus' hour has come and passed, it would be through the Apostles that Jesus message would go out and how the world would learn of Him.

Jesus' words in response to the Greek request *The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified* is the third time in the Gospel of John that Jesus predicts his death. Speaking to Nicodemus in Chapter 3 Jesus says *No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.* In Chapter 10, Jesus says *I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. "The* hour" and "lifted up" are key code words. You may recall that at the Wedding Feast at Cana, Jesus says to Mary, his Mother, *My hour has not yet come.* In our passage this evening he says *The hour has come.* "The hour" clearly means the time to die. A few verses after our reading in verse 32, Jesus says, *And I, when I*

am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself. **The text then reads:** ***He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.*** **Lifted up certainly refers to the Crucifixion, but it also refers to the Ascension which completes the glorification of the Son of Man.**

Jesus then makes the analogy with a grain of wheat, if it remains in a storehouse it is just that, a grain, but if it goes into the earth it bears much fruit as Jesus says will be the case with him. He will die and rise again, and all the world will come to know him. This is the new level to which his mission has become.

Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. **Which it will be all depends on whether we wish to see Jesus and what we do in response to the sight of him. Do we follow him? Do we serve him? Remember from Matthew 25:40,** ***'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me.'***

Many in at least the western world are losing their lives literally and figuratively because of inordinate and unrestrained love of glamour, money, diversion, addictions, luxury, ego, narcissism. Yesterday in the New York Times I read a quote from "Call It Evil: Understanding the Trump Era" by philosopher, Susan Neiman: ***When self-interest becomes the basis of reason, evil no longer needs to justify itself. It's already been mistaken for rationality.*** **Narcissism and self-interest distort perception, so perception becomes a mirror that alienates us from God and neighbour because we only see self. In various parts of the world, loneliness is now described as an epidemic. Chronic loneliness raises the risk of heart disease by 29%, stroke by 32%, and dementia by 50%. It is the health risk equivalent of 15 cigarettes a day. But one cannot be lonely if one sees Jesus in all creation, especially in one another, and one cannot be lonely if one serves him?**

Seeing Jesus is not without cost. Seeing Jesus demands attention. It demands giving up all sorts of things that get in the way. It means giving of time, talent and resources. It means transcending ego. It means self-giving and seeing real need in others.

Resisting all temptation for self-praise, what do you notice that is different in your life compared to what you know of the lives of your friends, neighbours, relatives who have no religion or for whom religion is a distant memory? For me, I never miss the money I give away; nor do I regret the time I give to church and other work in the community. On the contrary it gives my life meaning and saves me from the trap of self-absorption. Everything I do that I don't have to do; I do because, perhaps through a glass darkly, I would see Jesus. Amen