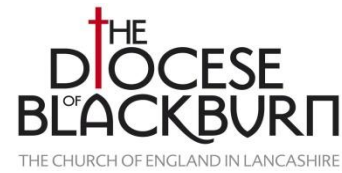


WEEKLY SERMON

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How to really see Jesus

A reflection on John 12:20-33

I got an invitation to go to Buckingham Palace yesterday. We are going in a couple of weeks' time to see a friend and colleague receive an MBE from the King.

It is sure to be a wonderful day full of pomp and ceremony. A reward for him following a lifetime of service to his community. His service has involved gift as well as a great deal of sacrifice. Some of his work was paid employment, but a great deal was also done in a voluntary capacity and involved giving from his own finances.

At times there were plaudits and congratulations, but much of the hard graft has gone unseen.

People are awarded an MBE because of an achievement or service in and to the community which has been outstanding in its field and has delivered sustained impact; standing out as an example to others. It is a 'thank you' on behalf of the nation for the sacrifice, hard work and commitment that has been given. Certainly, in this case, it is very well deserved.

We know of course that not everyone who gives 'outstanding service to their community' and delivers 'sustained impact' will get rewarded for it by royalty. Most people who give of themselves do so because of a love for others and a wish to improve the lives of those around them.

In this week's gospel a group of Greeks ask the disciple Philip if they can 'see Jesus'. Not only do they get to see Jesus in the flesh, but he also tells them how they can continue to see him.

Using the imagery of a grain of wheat, Jesus tells us that: 'unless it falls into the ground and dies, it remains a single grain'.

Jesus is talking of his forthcoming death by crucifixion, a radical act of sacrificial love for humanity. He is trusting that, like the grain of wheat, through his death new life will flourish.

Although Jesus, in his humanity admits that his heart was troubled he encourages the Greeks to embody his example of radical love; giving of their lives so new life can flourish. The image of the crucified Christ draws us into a new way of being a community. One of love, justice, and inclusion. Our reward however is not an MBE from the King but a relationship with Jesus, the King of Kings.

Rev Calum Crombie, Managing HMP Chaplain

HEALTHY CHURCHES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES