

As we approach Holy Week –the Great Week as it has been called-we prepare ourselves to mark and reflect on the Passion of Jesus. This is the Great Week because through the Lord’s suffering and death our freedom from sin and death has been won.

After Andrew and Philip went to Jesus with the news that some Greeks were seeking Jesus, Our Lord replied: *Very truly I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.*” This applies directly to Jesus’ suffering and death for he would be put into the ground –but he will also rise from the tomb and *“draw all people to himself.”*

But this also applies to us because the Lord then immediately says: *“The person who loves their life loses it, and the person who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life.”* Lent is about learning all over again how to die to ourselves and to rise to serve God and our neighbour. In Hebrews we learn that Jesus learned about obedience to his Father through his suffering in this world – so we to must learn the lesson of obedience to God and the lesson of what our true priorities are as a hard fought continuous lesson.

When I was a boy my Baltimore Catechism taught me why God made me: *“To know, love and serve God in this world and in the next.”* Jesus puts it this way in today’s Gospel: *“Whoever serves me, my Father will honour.”*

Like the Lenten Season, to be a Synodal Church means to have an attitude of serving God for his greater glory and not serving ourselves –rather, seeking God’s will in all our planning and pastoral work. And by so doing we become his disciples-his followers – our Synod theme has always been: **Disciples- Established, Anointed and Sent in Christ** : *“Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will be my servant also.”*

We have stressed often that the Synod process is a way of listening to the Holy Spirit that has been placed within us. It is truly amazing that what we have been trying to do in our Synod is a direct response to the prophecy of Jeremiah. Jeremiah spoke of a future time when a new Covenant will be established within the hearts of believers. This is a different Covenant than the former Law which

was broken many times over. The Law was like a command that people frequently sought to break or to show their own superiority over it . But the New Law is something placed within us through the Holy Spirit and the Spirit penetrates our hearts where we learn intimately that God is love because he loved us even by taking our transgressions upon himself. Each believer learns through the Holy Spirit that God is love and does not need instruction from another like a school child: *“All from the least to the greatest shall know me.”*

As we go forth from our General Sessions we ask the grace to know who we are as **Established, Anointed and Sent in Christ!** And to appreciate and know the gift that we have received. Then like the Apostles in the Gospel today, we can speak of Christ and in a certain sense show Jesus to those who desire to meet him today. Please God our Synod and it’s fruits will help us to do precisely that!