

The glory of the world includes things like fame, money, power. On TV, we see people working very hard to be famous. I have a confession to make. I like to watch American Idol. I like the singing, but it amazes me how these folks are willing to do almost anything for recognition, for fame, for the glory of the world. And how many people have we seen in music and movies who have sought so desperately for the glory of the world and have had their lives end in utter destruction?

But Jesus tells what true glory entails: "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit." Jesus is telling us that true glory comes from selflessness, laying down our lives.

This is counter-intuitive for us. We have the urge to take more for ourselves. But that is not the way to heaven. Again Jesus says "Whoever loves his life loses it." If we truly love ourselves, we must give ourselves away. Sacrifice & selflessness. Not easy. We like to take it easy, we like to get comfortable in life, we get caught in the rut of always seeking pleasure for ourselves.

Laying down our lives doesn't necessarily mean we have to go be a missionary in Africa. It is enough to live our vocations well, our place in life well. Life lived in the place where we are always provides us with the opportunities to lay down our lives. It is just a matter of if we are willing to do it.

Pope John Paul II once said "Our vocations are God's way of teaching us how to love." And Mother Teresa would remind us that if we really want to love, we must love until it hurts. Once it hurts, then we know that we are beginning to love.

We are closing in now on Holy Week where we see in a solemn way Jesus: our pattern of selflessness and self-giving. We must decide day by day, minute by minute in our concrete lives – follow Him to the Cross, giving ourselves away out of love for God and others, and if we do this, we will find true life.

Given by Father Mark Gurtner at Our Lady of Good Hope Catholic Church, Fort Wayne, Indiana, on the 5th Sunday of Lent, 2012.