

SERMON AT BRUNSWICK: 6/4/2003: LENT5: GEOFF CHADWICK:

“SEE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE GEEKS TURN UP”

Today’s Gospel begins: “Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks.” (Jn 12:20, NRSV). This simple little verse is one of great significance in Jn’s Gospel. This little verse marks a change in direction in Jn’s Gospel. Up until now the story has been of Jesus’ ministry, but in a short little while, he will be washing the disciple’s feet, arrested on trumped up charges and executed. All of this is about to happen, but not before the Greeks have sought him out first.

It’s almost as if Jesus can’t enter into the last days of his ministry before being recognised by the non-Jews. The Greeks who seek him out represent the outside world looking for Jesus. We could use an excellent Australianism here: “Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some *Geeks*.”

Geeks; those in Australia who don’t seem to fit in. Those who seem a little foreign to us. Geeks -who are a bit odd and awkward – those with whom we seem to be uncomfortable.

It is these “geeky” people who seek out Jesus. These bumbling, yet curious outsiders work through Philip and Andrew. Yet it is seeking Geeks who cause world changing events to happen. Once their seeking is known, Jesus replies: “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified” (Jn 12:23, NRSV).

So what of this glorification? What does it mean? Well the scholars have various theories. Some say it is the crucifixion, some the resurrection some the transfiguration, and others the birth. Personally, I like the idea that Jesus’ glorification is multi-faceted – that it is not just one of these things but that it is all of them. For me, the glorification of Jesus is his whole life. It is the totality of who he was, what he did and what

he taught. All these point to his glorification. Sure there are some bits that are more glorious than others, but it is the sUM total of everything that causes us to give him glory.

“Glory” here, in the Greek (or should I say in the Geek!) is the word *doxa*. This is where we get the words *doxology* and *orthodox*. A doxology being a song of praise (eg Praise God from whom all Blessings Flow); and *orthodox* literally meaning *right praise*. Originally, in ancient Christianity to be orthodox meant to praise God in the right way; not as it does now; to have the correct ideas about God. An orthodox Christian is one who *prays with praise*.

So we *prays with praise*. We give Jesus glory, not just because of his birth, not just because of his transfiguration, not just because of his crucifixion and not just because of his resurrection. We give praise for all of it. We marvel of the totality of Jesus’ life and what that means for us. We marvel and we become like Geeks; a bit awkward, a bit lost for words, needing to first check things out with Philip and Andrew. Nevertheless, we ask to see Jesus and as we see him we get more than we bargain for:

Not only will we see him but we will also hear:

“And I [Jesus], when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself” (Jn 12:23, NRSV)

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.