

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT (3/28-29/2009)

Jeremiah 31/31-34, Psalm 51, Hebrews 5/7-9, John 12/20-33

Those of you who are into golf know that the Masters tournament in August, Georgia is almost upon us.

It's a spring ritual in the golf world, one of the most prestigious tournaments of the year. Over and over again, especially on TV, you will be reminded of this coming event.

In similar fashion, as we draw closer to Easter, the readings in our Sunday and daily Scriptural lessons focus in more and more on the coming events in Jerusalem, the passion and death of Jesus.

You've been through it all before, of course, and yet, each year, there is something new and provoking about the happenings around Jesus.

It's on Jesus' mind in today's Gospel passage from *John*.

"I am troubled now, yet what should I say? 'Father, save me from this hour?'"

This is the only passage in John's account of the Good News where Jesus shows some doubt, some vacillation, some uncertainty.

It doesn't last long however; immediately Jesus resolves the issue: *"But it was for this purpose that I came to this hour. Father glorify your name."*

In *Matthew, Mark and Luke*, a more prolonged moment of uncertainty is narrated at the scene in the garden at Gethsemane on the very night of his arrest, and Jesus seems far more vulnerable.

It's pretty obvious that the thought of what was to come troubled Jesus greatly.

We would have it no other way when you come to think about it.

His state of mind is easily understood by us because we would be troubled as well were we faced with such a certain prospect of suffering.

Jesus draws us into his passion and death when he says: *"Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there also will my servant be."*

The prophet, Jeremiah, announces to the people today that God wishes to form a new relationship with them.

They are no longer children to be led around by a doting father or mother.

No, the Lord says: *"I will place my law within them, and write it upon their hearts."*

In other words, we are being called each Lent to go deeper and deeper into our adult relationship with Jesus.

So, we are five weeks into this Lent; where are you?

Any progress in your growth towards the Lord?

Those are questions for every single one of us.

Less than two weeks remain in Lent; then we shall segue into the final days of the Sacred Triduum.

Can you take stock and make these final days of Lent profitable to your interior life?