



Saturday 4th week before Lent

*When that day comes, you will not ask me any questions.
In all truth I tell you, anything you ask from the Father he will grant in my name.
Until now you have not asked anything in my name.
Ask and you will receive, and so your joy will be complete.
I have been telling you these things in veiled language.
The hour is coming when I shall no longer speak to you in veiled language
but tell you about the Father in plain words.
When that day comes you will ask in my name;
and I do not say that I shall pray to the Father for you,
because the Father himself loves you for loving me, and believing that I came from God.
I came from the Father and have come into the world
and now I am leaving the world to go to the Father.'*

His disciples said, 'Now you are speaking plainly and not using veiled language. Now we see that you know everything and need not wait for questions to be put into words; because of this we believe that you came from God.' Jesus answered them:

*Do you believe at last? Listen; the time will come – indeed it has come already – when you are going to be scattered, each going his own way and leaving me alone.
And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.
I have told you all this so that you may find peace in me.
In the world you will have hardship, but be courageous:
I have conquered the world.*

John 16:23-end

Anything you ask from the Father he will grant in my name

We who live some eighty generations after Jesus may gain some help in identifying with these words when we recognise that they were penned to a community living three generations after Jesus. The message to them and to us is that we live in the full light of the love of God through our being “in Christ”. Remember John’s image of the vine, *I am the vine and you are the branches*. A vine comprises only of branches. Through the model of the vine we can grasp that when the Father looks on us, it is Jesus he sees. When we approach God in prayer we approach with and in the life of Jesus. This is the core meaning of our baptism. There is no distinction between “my” baptised life and the life of Jesus. So when we pray, the Father engages with us as “being Jesus”. This is an awesome concept and it transforms our life of prayer. Prayer is incredibly, overwhelmingly powerful when we pray in this identity with the life of Jesus. Prayer is never ignored, never rejected, any more than it is conceivable that the Father ignores or rejects the prayers of Jesus. Prayer always releases grace into whatever we pray for. This is the powerhouse of Christian ministry.