

There is something deeply moving in the first reading today.

St Paul gathers the elders of Ephesus and speaks to them as a father speaking for the last time to his children.

He knows suffering lies ahead.

He knows imprisonment is coming.

He knows this may be the final time they see his face.

And so every word carries weight.

No performance.

No wasted language.

Only truth.

And what does Paul say about his life?

“I served the Lord with all humility and with tears.”

That is apostolic life.

Not triumphalism.

Not worldly success.

Humility.

Tears.

Perseverance.

The modern world often imagines holiness as emotional comfort or visible success.

But Paul speaks like a man marked by the Cross.

The Gospel has cost him something.

Then he says something even more striking:

“I did not shrink from proclaiming to you the whole counsel of God.”

The whole counsel.

Not convenient parts.

Not softened truth.

Not silence where the world becomes hostile.

Everything.

Because souls are too precious for half-truths.

That line should shake the Church in every age.

Because there is always pressure to reduce the Faith.

To make it easier.

Less demanding.

Less supernatural.

Less offensive to the spirit of the age.

But Paul says:

I did not shrink back.

And today, on the memorial of St Dunstan, that becomes especially powerful.

Dunstan lived in a turbulent England.

Kings changed.

Violence erupted.

The Church was attacked and weakened repeatedly.

And yet he remained firm.

Reforming monasteries.

Defending the Faith.

Calling the nation back to holiness.

Not harshly for the sake of harshness—

but because truth matters.

Because souls matter.

England did not need flatterers.

It needed saints.

Then the Gospel opens before us one of the holiest moments in all Scripture.

Christ lifts His eyes to heaven and begins His great priestly prayer.

And the first thing He says is:

“Father, the hour has come.”

The hour.

The Cross stands directly before Him.

Betrayal is near.

Suffering is near.

Death is near.

And yet Christ speaks not with fear but with majesty.

Because He sees beyond the Cross to glory.

Then He says something extraordinary:

“This is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.”

Not merely endless existence.

Eternal life means communion with God.

To know Him.

Not abstractly.

Personally.

To live in union with the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit.

That is heaven beginning already within the soul.

And suddenly both readings come together.

Paul spends his life proclaiming the whole truth because eternal life is real.

Christ enters His Passion because eternal life is real.

Everything revolves around this.

Not earthly comfort.

Not popularity.

Salvation.

And perhaps the most sobering line comes near the end of the Gospel:

“I have manifested your name to those whom you gave me.”

Christ reveals the Father.

That is what the Church continues to do.

Not invent God.

Reveal Him faithfully.

And this is where the Church must be very careful in every age.

The temptation is always to reshape God according to human preferences.

To reduce Him to something manageable.

But Christ reveals the Father as He truly is.

And the Church must hand on that revelation faithfully.

That fidelity always costs something.

It cost Paul suffering.

It cost St Dunstan conflict.

It cost Christ the Cross.

And it will cost every serious Christian something too.

Because truth always collides with pride.

Holiness always disturbs worldliness.

And yet there is immense hope in today's Gospel.

Because Christ prays for His people before entering His Passion.

He already knows their weakness.

Peter's denial.

The apostles' fear.

Their future failures.

And still He prays for them.

That is deeply consoling.

Because the Church survives not because her members are flawless—

but because Christ intercedes for her continually.

And this becomes concrete at every Mass.

The same High Priest who prayed in the Upper Room now intercedes before the Father eternally.

And in the Eucharist He gives His own life to His people.

The Cross becomes present.

Grace flows again.

Souls are strengthened again.

So today the Church gives us both gravity and hope.

Gravity—because eternal life is real and truth matters eternally.

Hope—because Christ has not abandoned His Church.

He still prays for her.

Still strengthens her.

Still raises saints in difficult times.

And through faithful souls, He continues revealing the Father to the world.