

5th Sunday - Wheat



Thomas Hart Benton's painting (1967) takes us into a wheatfield at a pheasant's level, say, or a hare's. The first two rows of sturdy golden stalks have already been cut, revealing what Benton most wants to show us. A stem has snapped, its head falling to the ground. "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies," Jesus had told his disciples, "it remains just a single grain but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (John 12:24).

Jesus was using the lifecycle of wheat to explain to his disciples what he meant by saying that his 'hour' had come. He would be cut down in his prime, would fall, be buried. But from that place of burial, new life would sprout.

So we see the grain of Jesus' own life at the end of the broken stalk. But we too are called to this cycle of living and dying and living again (Jn 12. 24-26). How will we embody it with the grain of our lives?

Maya Angelou was indignant at those claiming the title 'Christian' in an easy 'job done' kind of way... "You're that already?" she'd query with irony. Instead, her thinking chimed with Jesus' own. "Being a Christian is being engaged in a process", she said.

That wheat is the hallmark of our discipleship.

Today...

...take the grain of our lives, O Christ,
that we may die and be raised with you.

Amen