

Saturday 7th of Easter

Gospel text (Jn 21,20-25): Peter looked back and saw that the disciple Jesus loved was following as well, the one who had reclined close to Jesus at the supper and had asked him, « Lord, who is to betray you?». On seeing him, Peter asked Jesus, «Lord, what about him?». Jesus answered, «If I want him to remain until I come, does that concern you? Follow me». Because of this the rumor spread in the community that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus had not said to Peter, «He will not die», but «suppose I want him to remain until I come».

It is this disciple who testifies about the things he has recorded here and we know that his testimony is true. But Jesus did many other things; if all were written down, the world itself would not hold the books recording them.

«He has recorded here and we know that his testimony is true»

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Today, we read the end of St. John's Gospel. Actually, it is the end of the appendix St. John's community added to the original text. In this particular case, it is a willingly significant fragment. The Resurrected Lord appears before his disciples and confirms they are to follow him, particularly as regards Peter. Next, comes the text we proclaim today in the liturgy.

The figure of the beloved disciple is central in this fragment and even in the totality of St. John's Gospel. It may refer to a concrete person —the disciple John— or, it can be a figure, behind which, any disciple loved by the Master can be placed. Whatever its meaning, the text helps to give an element of continuity to the Apostles' experience. The Resurrected Lord assures us of his presence amongst those who want to follow him.

«Suppose I want him to remain until I come» (Jn 21:22), may perhaps refer to this continuity rather than to a chronological space-time element. The beloved disciple becomes a testimony of all that, to the extent he realizes the Lord will always remain beside him. This is why he can write and his words are worth believing, because he glosses with his pen the continuous experiences of those living their mission in the midst of the world, while experiencing the presence of Jesus Christ. This beloved disciple can be each one of us provided we let be guided by the Holy Spirit, He who helps discovering this presence.

This text, already prepares us to celebrate, tomorrow, the Solemnity of Pentecost, the Gift of the Spirit: «And the Paraclete came down from Heaven: the Church's custodian and sanctifier, the souls' administrator, the castaways' pilot, the wanderers' lighthouse, the fighting ones' arbitrator and he who crowns the winners» (St. Cyril of Jerusalem).