Saturday of the Fourth Week of Lent

Gospel text (*Jn* 7:40-53): Some in the crowd who heard these words of Jesus said, “This is truly the Prophet.” Others said, “This is the Christ.” But others said, “The Christ will not come from Galilee, will he? Does not Scripture say that the Christ will be of David’s family and come from Bethlehem, the village where David lived?” So a division occurred in the crowd because of him. Some of them even wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him (…).

Who were Jesus’ accusers? (“The Jewish” question in John)

EDITORIAL TEAM evangeli.net (based on texts by Benedict XVI)
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Today, in the Gospel we perceive a certain "controversy" over the "Jews" around Jesus. In the fourth Gospel this is not a specific point made, although it rather appears as a constant in the ascent of Jesus to Jerusalem. But, ultimately, who exactly were Jesus’ accusers? According to John, it was simply "the Jews". But this expression does not in any way indicate the people of Israel in general; even less is it “racist” in character.

After all, John himself was ethnically a Jew, as were Jesus and all His followers. The entire early Christian community was made up of Jews. In John’s Gospel this word has a precise and clearly defined meaning: he is referring to the Temple aristocracy (there may be exceptions, such as Nicodemus). In Mark’s Gospel, then, in addition to “the Jews”, that is to say the dominant priestly circle, the ochlos (the “mass”) comes into play, the circle of Barabbas’ supporters, but not the Jewish people as such…

—O Jesus! Here I am to defend You, because You call me by my name.