Tuesday of the Fifth Week of Lent

Gospel text (*Jn* 8:21-30): Jesus said to the Pharisees: "I am going away and you will look for me (…). Where I am going you cannot come." So the Jews said, "He is not going to kill himself, is he, because he said, 'Where I am going you cannot come'?" (…).

They did not realize that he was speaking to them of the Father. So Jesus said (to them), "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will realize that I AM, and that I do nothing on my own, but I say only what the Father taught me (…)." Because he spoke this way, many came to believe in him.

The "leave" of Jesus (about martyrdom)

EDITORIAL TEAM evangeli.net (based on texts by Benedict XVI)
(Città del Vaticano, Vatican)

Today, Jesus announces his "departure", in a mysterious allusion to His "martyrdom". According to John, Jesus spoke twice about His "going away" where the Jews could not go (cf. Jn 7:34ss; 8:21s). His listeners tried to guess the meaning of this. In one case they said: "Surely he is not going to the dispersion among the Greeks… is He?" (Jn 7:35). In the other: "He is not going to kill himself, is He?" (Jn 8:22). For both assumptions something real is assumed, but fails dramatically in the fundamental truth.

His "leave" is a leave towards death, not like suicide, but transforming his violent death in giving away his own life (cf Jn 10:18). This is how Jesus, though He did not go to Greece, reached the Greeks and manifested the Father to the pagan world through the cross and resurrection.

—"Why is it that I cannot leave with you now? I would give my life…". "Will you come with me later…" Simon Peter had to learn that martyrdom is not just a heroic act, but a free gift of God.