Thursday of the Fifth Week of Lent

Gospel text (*Jn* 8:51-59): Jesus said to the Jews: “Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever keeps my word will never see death.” So the Jews said to him, “Now we are sure that you are possessed. Abraham died, as did the prophets, yet you say, ‘Whoever keeps my word will never taste death.’ Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? (…). Jesus said to them, “Amen, amen, I say to you, before Abraham came to be, I AM.” (…).

Jesus, "I AM" previous to Abraham

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

Today, it appears again the "I AM" of Jesus. What still remains in the air are the questions "Who are you?"; "where do you come from?” By tracing their origin back beyond Abraham to God as their Father, Jesus’ interlocutors give the Lord the opportunity to restate His own origin with unmistakable clarity.

As Jesus tells us, Abraham not only points back —beyond himself— to God as Father, but above all he points ahead to Jesus, the Son: "Your father Abraham, rejoiced that he was to see My day: he saw it and was glad ". To the objection of the Jews that Jesus could hardly have seen Abraham, He answers: "before Abraham came into existence, I AM". Once again, the simple "I AM" stands before us in all its mystery, though now defined in contrast to Abraham’s “coming into existence”.

— Jesus’ “I AM” stands in contrast to the world of birth and death, the world of coming into being and passing away, a totally unique mode of being which transcends human categories.