Wednesday of the Second Week of Easter

Gospel text (*Jn* 3:16-21): God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him will not be condemned, but whoever does not believe has already been condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. And this is the verdict, that the light came into the world, but people preferred darkness to light, because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come toward the light, so that his works might not be exposed. But whoever lives the truth comes to the light, so that his works may be clearly seen as done in God.

"Light came into the world"

Fr. Damien LIN Yuanheng
(Singapore, Singapore)

Today with the myriad of opinions in modern living, it may seem that truth does not exist —truth about God, truth about gender issue, truth about marriage, moral truths, and, ultimately, truth about oneself.

Today's gospel passage identifies Christ to be "the way and the truth and the life" (Jn 14:6). Separate from Christ, there is only desolation, falsehood and death. There is one and only one road to heaven and it is called Jesus Christ.

Christ is not just another opinion. Christ is Truth itself. To deny truth is like someone who insists in closing his eyes from the sun-light. Whether he likes it or not, the sun will always be there; but the poor fellow has freely chosen to close his eyes from the sun of truth. Likewise, many through sheer will-power stay in their career, they claim to fulfill their full potential, forgetting that they could only attain the truth about themselves by walking with Christ.

On the other hand, according to Benedict XVI, "each person finds his good by adherence to God's plan for him, in order to realize it fully: in this plan, he finds his truth, and through adherence to this truth he becomes free (cf. Jn 8:32)" (Encyclical Letter "Caritas in Veritate"). The truth of each one is a calling to be a son or daughter of God in the heavenly home: "For this is the will of God, your sanctification" (1Thess 4:3). God wants free daughters and sons, not slaves.

Truly, the perfect "I" is a joint project between God and I. When we strive for holiness, we begin to reflect

the truth of God in our lives. The Pope said it beautifully: “Each saint is like a ray of light that shines forth from the Word of God” (Apostolic Exhortation "Verbum Domini").

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “O what wonderful good news! He who for our sake became like us in order to make us his brothers, now presents to his true Father his own humanity in order to draw all his kindred up after him.” (Saint Gregory of Nyssa)

- “While in creation the Father gave us proof of his immense love by giving us life, in the passion and death of his Son He gave us the proof of proofs: He came to suffer and die for us.” (Francis)

- “God's love for Israel is compared to a father's love for his son. His love for his people is stronger than a mother's for her children. God loves his people more than a bridegroom his beloved (Is 62:4-5); his love will be victorious over even the worst infidelities and will extend to his most precious gift: ‘God so loved the world that he gave his only Son’ (Jn 3:16).” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, Nº 219)

Other comments

“God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish”

Fr. Manel VALLS i Serra
(Barcelona, Spain)

Today the Gospel proposes to us once more to follow in the footsteps of Thomas, the Apostle that go from doubt to faith. Like Thomas, we approach the Lord full of doubts, but He also comes to meet us: “God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life” (Jn 3:16).

Thomas was not present in the first apparition of Jesus to the apostles, that Easter morning. “A week later” (Jn 20:26), in spite of his refusal to believe, Thomas joins the other disciples. The hint is quite clear: faith is not maintained far from the community. Far from our brothers, our faith does not grow nor ripen. At each Sunday's Eucharist we recognize His Presence. If Thomas was honest enough to show his doubts it was because the Lord did not initially grant him what He did to Mary of Magdala: not only to listen and to see the Lord, but to touch Him with her own hands. Christ comes to meet us, mostly when we are together with our brothers and are celebrating with them the partition of the Bread, that is, the Eucharist. It is then when He invites us to “put our fingers in His side”, that is, to penetrate the impenetrable mystery of His life.

The move from incredulity to Faith has its stages. Our conversion to Jesus Christ —our step from darkness into light— is a personal process, but we need the community. These past Easter days, we all have felt the urge to follow Jesus on His way of the Cross. Now, fully in Easter time, the Church invites us to enter the new life with Him, with our works being done in God (cf. Jn 3:21).

Today, we also have to personally feel Jesus' invitation to Thomas: “and do not be unbelieving, but believe.” (Jn 20:27). Our life is at stake, as “Whoever believes in him will not be condemned” (Jn 3:18), but goes to the light.