Thursday of the Fifth Week of Easter

Gospel text (*Jn* 15:9-11): Jesus said to his disciples: “As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and remain in his love. “I have told you this so that my joy might be in you and your joy might be complete”.

"As the Father loves me, so I also love you"

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Today, we hear again the intimate confidence Jesus had last Holy Thursday: “As the Father loves me, so I also love you” (Jn 15:9). The Father's love for the Son is immense, tender, dear. We can read it in the Book of Proverbs, when He affirms that long before initiating His deeds “then was I beside him as artisan; I was his delight day by day, playing before him all the while” (Pr 8:30). This is how He loves us and, prophetically announcing it in the same book, He adds: “Playing over the whole of his earth, having my delight with human beings.” (Pr 8:31).

The Father loves the Son, and Jesus tells us so: “And He that sent me is with me: the Father has not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him” (Jn 8:29). The Father loudly proclaimed it in the Jordan, when He says: “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.” (Mk 1:11) and later, on Mount Tabor: “This is my beloved Son. Listen to him.” (Mk 9:7).

Jesus has replied, “Abbà”, Father! Now He reveals to us, “As the Father loves me, so I also love you.” And what shall we do? To indeed stay by His love, to abide by His commandments, to love His Father's Will. Is this not the example He gives us? “I always keep my Father's commandments and remain in his love.”

But we, who are weak, fickle, cowards and —why not just admit it— even wicked at times, shall we then lose His friendship forever? No, He will not allow us to be tempted well beyond our own abilities! And, if we ever fail to abide by His commandments, let us ask Him for the grace of quickly coming back to Him, as the prodigal son to the Father's house. And to be able to receive the Sacrament of Penance and be forgiven for our sins. “I love you” —Jesus tells us—. “I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete” (Jn 15:11).

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “O my God, Trinity whom I adore, grant my soul peace. Make it your heaven, your beloved dwelling and the place of your rest. May I never abandon you there, but may I be there, wholly and entirely, completely vigilant in my faith, entirely adoring, and wholly given over to your creative action.” (Saint Elizabeth of the Trinity)

- “God can transform into love even the burdensome and oppressive aspects of our lives. It is important that we ‘abide’ in Christ, in the vine.” (Benedict XVI)

- “Fruit of the Spirit and fullness of the Law, charity keeps the commandments of God and his Christ: ‘Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love’ (Jn 15:9-10).” (Catechism Of the Catholic Church, Nº 1824)