Saturday of the Fifth Week of Easter

Gospel text (*Jn* 15:18-21): Jesus said to his disciples; "If the world hates you, realize that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, the world would love its own; but because you do not belong to the world, and I have chosen you out of the world, the world hates you. Remember the word I spoke to you, 'No slave is greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. And they will do all these things to you on account of my name, because they do not know the one who sent me."

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Fr. Ferran JARABO i Carbonell
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Today, the Gospel is in opposition to the world of Christ's followers. The world represents whatever sinfulness there may be in our existence. Consequently, one of the main characteristics of Christ's followers is fighting all evil and sin to be found in the world and inside every man. This is why, Jesus is the light of men, the light that illuminates the world's darkness. Karol Wojtyla exhorts us "so that this light makes us strong and capable to accept and love the entire Truth of Christ, and love it even more when opposed by our world."

Neither Christians nor the Church can follow the passing fads or criteria of this world. Christ's criterion is the unique, definitive and unavoidable one for us to follow. It is not up to Jesus to adapt Himself to the world where we live; it is up to us instead to transform our lives to imitate Jesus. "Christ is the same one whether yesterday, today or always." This should make us wonder. When our secularized society demands from us and from the Church certain changes or licenses, we are simply being asked to move away from God. We, Christians, however, should be faithful to Christ and to His message. Saint Irenaeus says: "God does not need anything, man needs communion with God, so the glory of man is to preserve and continue the service of God."

This fidelity may, quite often, mean persecution: "If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you" (Jn 15:20). We should not be afraid of persecution; we should rather be afraid of not attempting strongly enough to always do God's will. Let's be brave and let us proclaim without any fear Christ resurrected, light and joy of all Christians! Let us allow the Holy Spirit to transform us so that we can inform the whole world about Him!

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “Do not refuse to be rejuvenated united to Christ, even in the old world. He tells you: Do not fear, ‘your youth will be renewed like that of the eagle’” (Saint Augustine)

- “If we seek to deepen our relationship with the Father, then we should not be surprised to find that we are misunderstood, opposed, or even persecuted for our beliefs” (Saint John Paul II)

- “Before Christ's second coming the Church must pass through a final trial that will shake the faith of many believers. The persecution that accompanies her pilgrimage on earth will unveil the ‘mystery of iniquity’ in the form of a religious deception offering men an apparent solution to their problems at the price of apostasy from the truth” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, № 675)