Monday of the Sixth Week of Easter

Gospel text (*Jn* 15:26—16:4): Jesus said to his disciples, “When the Advocate comes whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth that proceeds from the Father, he will testify to me. And you also testify, because you have been with me from the beginning. “I have told you this so that you may not fall away. They will expel you from the synagogues; in fact, the hour is coming when everyone who kills you will think he is offering worship to God. They will do this because they have not known either the Father or me. I have told you this so that when their hour comes you may remember that I told you."

“And you also testify”

Fr. Higinio Rafael ROSOLEN IVE
(Cobourg, Ontario, Canada)

Today in the Gospel, Jesus announces and promises the coming of the Holy Spirit: "When the Paraclete comes … that proceeds from the Father, he will testify to me" (Jn 15:26). "Paraclete" literally means "the one who is called near to one", and is usually translated as "Comforter". In this way, Jesus reminds us of the goodness of God, for the Holy Spirit being the love of God, He instills peace in our hearts, serenity in adversity and joy for the things of God. He makes us look to the things above and unite with God.

Furthermore, Jesus says to the Apostles: "And you also testify" (Jn 15:27). To testify it is necessary to:

First, have communion and intimacy with Jesus. This is born of the daily relationship with Him: reading the Gospel, listening to His words, knowing His teachings, frequenting His sacraments, being in communion with His Church, imitating His example, keeping the commandments, seeing Him in the saints, recognizing Him in our brothers, having His spirit and loving Him. It is about having a personal and living experience of Jesus.

Second, our testimony is credible if it appears in our works. A witness is not only a person who knows that something is true, but one who is also willing to say the truth and live it. What we experience and live in our soul we must transmit to the outside world. We are witnesses of Jesus not only if we know His teachings, but — and mainly — when we want and make others to know and love Him. As the saying goes, "Actions speak louder than words."

Pope Francis told us: “I am grateful for the beautiful example given to me by so many Christians who joyfully sacrifice their lives and their time. This witness comforts and sustains me in my own effort to overcome selfishness and to give more fully of myself.” And he added: "I especially ask Christians in

communities throughout the world to offer a radiant and attractive witness of fraternal communion." That is always a light that attracts.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “Just as Christ’s sacred flesh has power to make those in whom it is present into one body, so the one, indivisible Spirit of God, dwelling in all, causes all to become one in spirit” (Saint Cyril of Alexandria)
- “Ask the Lord for the grace to receive the Holy Spirit who makes us remember the things of Jesus who will guide us to the truth and prepare us every day to bear this witness according to the Lord’s will” (Francis)
- “Jesus Christ, having entered the sanctuary of heaven once and for all, intercedes constantly for us as the mediator who assures us of the permanent outpouring of the Holy Spirit” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, Nº 667)

Other comments

“I will send you from the Father the Spirit of truth that proceeds from the Father, he will testify to me”

Fr. Jordi POU i Sabater
(Sant Jordi Desvalls, Girona, Spain)

Today, the Gospel is almost as applicable as it was in the last years of St. John the Evangelist. In those days, to be a Christian was not in fashion (in fact, it was rather dangerous) as nowadays, it is not either. Should we want to be well-regarded by our society, we better not be Christians, because, in many ways —as it happened to the first Christian Jews— “They will expel you from the synagogues” (Jn 16:2).

We are well aware that to be a Christian today is to go upstream. It has always been this way. Even when “everybody” was a Christian: those who really wanted to be Christians were not too well considered by some. If abiding by Jesus Christ's law, a Christian is a living witness of what God had planned for all men; it is the clear evidence that it is both possible to imitate Jesus Christ and to live with a man's dignity. Many, though, will not be pleased with this example, very much in the same way as Jesus displeased those who killed Him. The reasons for this refusal may be several, and we have to bear in mind that, at times, our testimony will be taken as an accusation.

It would not be fair to say that, because of his writings, St. John was a pessimist: he gives us a vivid description of a victorious Church and of Christ's final triumph. It cannot be said either that he did not have to go through the same suffering he describes. He does not hide the reality of life or the substance

of Christian life: to fight.

A fight for all concerned, for we can never win by ourselves. The Holy Spirit is our battle partner who fights by our side. The Holy Spirit gives us the necessary strength. The Holy Spirit is the Protector, who delivers us from all danger. With The Holy Spirit by our side we should not be afraid of anything.

John fully trusted Jesus; He offered Him his life. Thus, it was not difficult for him to trust He who was sent by Him: the Holy Spirit.

Other comments

«I will send you (…) the Spirit of truth»

Pbro. D. Luis A. GALA Rodríguez
(Campeche, Mexico)

Today, the Gospel's text contains Jesus' advice on the hardship that is bound to face every one of his disciples «Still more, the hour is coming when anyone who kills you will claim to be serving God» (Jn 16:2). In plain human terms it is normal that fear may overtake us - however, just as it is certain that great comfort comes from knowing we are not alone, as we rely on the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of truth, to always pay testimonial (Jn 15:26).

It is of vital importance to be aware that the Holy Spirit lives within every one of us who is baptized: after all we are, by adoption, "children of God", and "living temple of the Spirit" — how true! And how often we forget or disbelieve such truth, because we haven't known either the Father or the Son (Jn 16:3). We live in a crisis of values and faith, thinking that change will come from the outside and from the sole work of God, something magical. But the Gospel reminds us that change operates within and upon ourselves through the labor of the Holy Spirit. The "Spirit" will not come to solve our problems; rather it will teach us to comprehend them, thus leading us to understanding what it is that we really have to change within ourselves, so as to sustain and enliven the testimony of our lives in Christ.

Benedict XVI reminds us, on the opening Mass for the Year of Faith, that "today, more than ever, to evangelize implies to pay testimony of a new life, transformed by God", for which the essential lies in the Gospel and a steady faith in the Church.

One needs to be open to the touch of the Spirit of God, in order not to fear in face of so much pain, suffering, and helplessness in a world so materialistic — even though it might seem like God is absent or out of reach — but rather learning to ask for the help of the Spirit: "Come Holy Spirit and renew your Church according to your will".