

Saturday of the Seventh Week of Easter

Gospel text (Jn 21:20-25): Peter turned and saw the disciple following whom Jesus loved, the one who had also reclined upon his chest during the supper and had said, “Master, who is the one who will betray you?” When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, “Lord, what about him?” Jesus said to him, “What if I want him to remain until I come? What concern is it of yours? You follow me.” So the word spread among the brothers that that disciple would not die. But Jesus had not told him that he would not die, just “What if I want him to remain until I come? What concern is it of yours?”

It is this disciple who testifies to these things and has written them, and we know that his testimony is true. There are also many other things that Jesus did, but if these were to be described individually, I do not think the whole world would contain the books that would be written.

“It is this disciple who testifies to these things and has written them, and we know that his testimony is true”

Fr. Fidel CATALÁN i Catalán
(Terrassa, Barcelona, Spain)

Today, we read the end of St. John's Gospel. Actually, it is the end of the appendix St. John's community added to the original text. In this particular case, it is a willingly significant fragment. The Resurrected Lord appears before his disciples and confirms they are to follow him, particularly as regards Peter. Next, comes the text we proclaim today in the liturgy.

The figure of the beloved disciple is central in this fragment and even in the totality of St. John's Gospel. It may refer to a concrete person —the disciple John— or, it can be a figure, behind which, any disciple loved by the Master can be placed.

Whatever its meaning, the text helps to give an element of continuity to the Apostles' experience. The Resurrected Lord assures us of his presence amongst those who want to follow him.

“What if I want him to remain until I come?” (Jn 21:22), may perhaps refer to this continuity rather than to a chronological space-time element. The beloved disciple becomes a testimony of all that, to the extent he realizes the Lord will always remain beside him. This is why he can write and his words are worth believing, because he glosses with his pen the continuous experiences of those living their mission in the midst of the world, while experiencing the presence of Jesus Christ. This beloved disciple can be each one of us provided we let ourselves be guided by the Holy Spirit, He who helps us in discovering this presence.

This text, already prepares us to celebrate, tomorrow, the Solemnity of Pentecost, the Gift of the Spirit: “And the Paraclete came down from Heaven: the Church's custodian and sanctifier, the souls' administrator, the castaways' pilot, the wanderers' lighthouse, the fighting ones' arbitrator and he who crowns the winners” (St. Cyril of Jerusalem).

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “Those days, dearly-beloved, which intervened between the Lord's Resurrection and Ascension did not pass by in uneventful leisure, but great mysteries were ratified in them, deep truths revealed” (Saint Leo the Great)
- “It is no less challenging to follow Christ today. It means learning to keep our gaze fixed on Jesus, growing close to him, listening to his word and encountering him in the sacraments; it means learning to conform our will to his” (Benedict XVI)
- “The disciple of Christ must not only keep the faith and live on it, but also profess it, confidently bear witness to it, and spread it: ‘All however must be prepared to confess Christ before men and to follow him along the way of the Cross, amidst the persecutions which the Church never lacks’ (Second Vatican Council)” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, N° 1816)