Wednesday of the Fourth Week of Lent

Gospel text (*Jn* 5:17-30): Jesus answered the Jews: “My Father is at work until now, so I am at work.” For this reason they tried all the more to kill him, because he not only broke the Sabbath but he also called God his own father, making himself equal to God.

Jesus answered and said to them, “Amen, amen, I say to you, the Son cannot do anything on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing; for what he does, the Son will do also. For the Father loves the Son and shows him everything that he himself does, and he will show him greater works than these, so that you may be amazed. For just as the Father raises the dead and gives life, so also does the Son give life to whomever he wishes. Nor does the Father judge anyone, but he has given all judgment to the Son, so that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes in the one who sent me has eternal life and will not come to condemnation, but has passed from death to life. Amen, amen, I say to you, the hour is coming and is now here when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For just as the Father has life in himself, so also he gave to the Son the possession of life in himself. And he gave him power to exercise judgment, because he is the Son of Man. Do not be amazed at this, because the hour is coming in which all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and will come out, those who have done good deeds to the resurrection of life, but those who have done wicked deeds to the resurrection of condemnation. “I cannot do anything on my own; I judge as I hear, and my judgment is just, because I do not seek my own will but the will of the one who sent me.”

“Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes in the one who sent me has eternal life”

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Today the Gospel tells us about the response Jesus gave to some who thought it was wrong that He had healed a paralytic on the Sabbath. Jesus Christ takes advantage of these criticisms to show his status as the Son of God and, therefore, Lord of the Sabbath. These words would be the reason for his condemnation on the day of the judgment in Caiaphas' house. Indeed, when Jesus acknowledged himself to be the Son of God, the high priest exclaimed: "He has blasphemed! What further need have we of witnesses? You have now heard the blasphemy; what is your opinion?" (Mt 26:65).

Jesus had often made references to the Father, but always making a distinction: the Fatherhood of God is different if it concerns Christ or men. And the Jews who listened to him understood him very well: he was not the Son of God like the others, but the filiation he claimed for himself was a natural filiation. Jesus affirms that his nature and that of the Father are equal, even though they are different persons. In this way he manifests his divinity. This is a very interesting fragment of the Gospel in view of the revelation of the mystery of the Holy Trinity.

Among the things that the Lord says today there are some that make special reference to all those who throughout history will believe in Him: to listen to and believe Jesus is to already have eternal life (cf. Jn 5:24). Certainly, it is not yet definitive life, but it is already participating in the promise. It is important that we keep this in mind and make the effort to listen to the word of Jesus as what it really is: the Word of God that saves. Reading and meditating on the Gospel must form part of our habitual religious practices. In the revealed pages we will hear the words of Jesus, immortal words that open the doors of eternal life to us. In short, as St. Ephrem taught, the Word of God is an inexhaustible spring of life.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “By dying Christ submitted himself to the laws of death, but by rising he abolished them. So he put an end to the hold of death. From being eternal, he made it temporal. For That way, just as in Adam all die, so in Christ all would be will be brought to life.” (Saint Leo the Great)

- “Christ is a divine judge with a human heart, a judge who wants to give life. Only unrepentant attachment to evil can prevent him from offering this gift, for which he did not hesitate to face death.” (Saint John Paul II)

- “Christ is Lord of eternal life. Full right to pass definitive judgement on the works and hearts of men belongs to him as redeemer of the world (...). Yet the Son did not come to judge, but to save and to give the life he has in himself. By rejecting grace in this life, one already judges oneself, and can even condemn oneself for all eternity by rejecting the Spirit of love.” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, № 679)