Thursday of the Fourth Week of Lent

Gospel text (*Jn* 5:31-47): Jesus said to the Jews: “If I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is not true. But there is another who testifies on my behalf, and I know that the testimony he gives on my behalf is true. You sent emissaries to John, and he testified to the truth. I do not accept human testimony, but I say this so that you may be saved. He was a burning and shining lamp, and for a while you were content to rejoice in his light. But I have testimony greater than John’s. The works that the Father gave me to accomplish, these works that I perform testify on my behalf that the Father has sent me. Moreover, the Father who sent me has testified on my behalf. But you have never heard his voice nor seen his form, and you do not have his word remaining in you, because you do not believe in the one whom he has sent. You search the Scriptures, because you think you have eternal life through them; even they testify on my behalf. But you do not want to come to me to have life.

“I do not accept human praise; moreover, I know that you do not have the love of God in you. I came in the name of my Father, but you do not accept me; yet if another comes in his own name, you will accept him. How can you believe, when you accept praise from one another and do not seek the praise that comes from the only God? Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father: the one who will accuse you is Moses, in whom you have placed your hope. For if you had believed Moses, you would have believed me, because he wrote about me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?”

“If I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is not true”

Fr. Miquel MASATS i Roca
(Girona, Spain)

Today the Gospel teaches us how Jesus deals with the following objection: according to Dt 19:15, for a testimony to be valid, it must come from two or three witnesses. Jesus cites in his favor the testimony of John the Baptist, the testimony of the Father - which is manifested in the miracles worked by him - and finally, the testimony of the Scriptures.

Jesus Christ reproaches those who listen to him for the three impediments they have to recognize him as the Messiah, Son of God: lack of love for God; the absence of right intention - they seek only human glory - and that they interpret the Scriptures in a self-serving way.

The Holy Father John Paul II wrote: “The only way to approach the contemplation of Christ's face is by listening in the Spirit to the Father's voice, since “no one knows the Son except the Father” (Mt 11:27). What is needed, then, is a revelation from above. In order to receive that revelation, attentive listening is indispensable.”

For this reason, we must bear in mind that, in order to confess Jesus Christ as the true Son of God, the external tests that are presented to us are not enough; uprightness of the will, that is, a good disposition, is very important.

During this time of Lent, by intensifying the works of penance that facilitate interior renewal, we will improve our dispositions to contemplate the true face of Christ. For this reason, St. Josemaría tells us: “That Christ you see is not Jesus. It is only the pitiful image that your blurred eyes are able to form… — Purify yourself. Clarify your sight with humility and penance. Then… the pure light of Love will not be denied you. And you will have perfect vision. The image you see will be really his: He himself!”

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “It is not a question of knowing something about God but of having God within.” (Saint Gregory of Nyssa)

- “Let your light shine in our society, in political and economic life, in culture and research. Even if it is only a flicker amid so many deceptive lights, it nonetheless draws its power and splendour from the great Morning Star, the Risen Christ.” (Benedict XVI)

- “The signs worked by Jesus attest that the Father has sent him. They invite belief in him (…). So miracles strengthen faith in the One who does his Father's works (…). But his miracles can also be occasions for ‘offence’ (Mt 11:6). They are not intended to satisfy people's curiosity or desire for magic. Despite his evident miracles some people reject Jesus; he is even accused of acting by the power of demons.” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, Nº 548)