

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 faces the following objection: as Deuteronomy 19:15, says, “One witness alone shall not stand against someone in regard to any crime or any offense that may have been committed; a charge shall stand only on the testimony of two or three witnesses”. Jesus claims in His favor John the Baptist's testimony, the Father's testimony —manifest through the works He did— and, finally, the testimony of the Scriptures.

Jesus Christ reproaches those who listen to Him for three impediments they have in accepting Him as the Son of God's Messiah: the lack of love for God, the absence of honest intentions —as they solely pursue human glory— and the tendency to prioritize their own interests when interpreting the Scriptures.

Holy Father Saint John Paul II wrote: “You can get to the contemplation of Christ's face only by listening, in the Spirit, to the Father's voice, for no one knows the Son except the Father (cf. Mt 11:27). Therefore, the revelation from the Almighty is needed. But, to receive it, it is indispensable to place oneself in a listening attitude”.

This is why we have to bear in mind that, to declare Jesus Christ as the true Son of God, the proposed external evidence is not enough; will's rectitude is very important, that is, a good moral disposition.

In this time of Lent, by increasing the deeds of penance that facilitate our interior renovation, we shall improve our disposition to contemplate Christ's true face. This is why, Saint Josemaría, says: “That Christ you see, is not Jesus. —It will be, in any case, the sad image your blurred eyes may form... —Purify yourself. Clarify your look with humility and penance. Afterwards... you won't be lacking the clear lights of Love. And you will have a perfect vision. Your image will really be: Him!”

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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

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“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)

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“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, N° 548)