Monday of the Fifth Week of Lent (C)

Gospel text (*Jn* 8:12-20): Jesus spoke to them again, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” So the Pharisees said to him, “You testify on your own behalf, so your testimony cannot be verified.” Jesus answered and said to them, “Even if I do testify on my own behalf, my testimony can be verified, because I know where I came from and where I am going. But you do not know where I come from or where I am going. You judge by appearances, but I do not judge anyone. And even if I should judge, my judgment is valid, because I am not alone, but it is I and the Father who sent me. Even in your law it is written that the testimony of two men can be verified. I testify on my behalf and so does the Father who sent me.”

So they said to him, “Where is your father?” Jesus answered, “You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also.” He spoke these words while teaching in the treasury in the temple area. But no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come.

“I am the Light of the world”

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Today Jesus gives us a picture of Himself that fills with meaning the life of those of us that despite our many deficiencies, wish to follow him: “I am the Light of the world” (Jn 8:12). Jesus' person, his teachings and his examples of life, are light that enlightens our entire existence, whether in good times or in moments of suffering or contradiction.

What does that mean? That under any circumstance in which we may find ourselves —such as in our work, in our relations with others, in our relation to God, in our joys and in our pains— we may ponder: What did Jesus do in a similar situation? We can always look into the Gospels and reply: I will do the very same thing! To that end, Saint John Paul II incorporated to the Holy Rosary —a “compendium of the Gospels”, as he himself recalls— the mysteries on the public life of Jesus, what he calls the “Mysteries of Light”. Thus, the Holy Father said: “Declared the beloved Son of the Father at the Baptism in the Jordan, Christ is the one who announces the coming of the Kingdom, bears witness to it in his works and proclaims its demands.”

Jesus is Light and “Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” (Jn 8:12). As his own disciples, the Lord also invites us to be light for the world, to shine a light of hope amidst the violence, mistrust and fear of our brothers and sisters; a light of faith amidst their darkness, doubts and questions; a light of love amidst the many lies, bitterness and passions that surround us.

The Holy Father, as a backdrop to all the “Mysteries of Light”, reminds us of Mary's words at the wedding feast at Cana: “Do whatever He tells you” (Jn 2:5). This is the right way for Jesus to be the Light of the World, and for us to be able to illuminate with this same light.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “When you yourself lead me to the light, Lord Jesus Christ, I become co-heir with you. When we have dispersed the darkness surrounding us like mist over the eyes, let us behold the true God, crying: ‘Hail, thou true light!’.” (Saint Clement of Alexandria)

- “For those who first heard Jesus, as for us, the symbol of light evokes the desire for truth and the thirst for the fullness of knowledge which are imprinted deep within every human being.” (Saint John Paul II)

- “In Jesus Christ, the whole of God's truth has been made manifest. ‘Full of grace and truth’ (Jn 1,14), he came as the ‘light of the world’ (Jn 8:12), he is the Truth. ‘Whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness’. The disciple of Jesus continues in his word so as to know ‘the truth [that] will make you free’ (cf. Jn 8:31-32) and that sanctifies (...).” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, Nº 2466)