

Thursday 5th of Lent

Gospel text (Jn 8,51-59): Jesus said to the Jews: "Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever keeps my word will never see death." (So) the Jews said to him, "Now we are sure that you are possessed. Abraham died, as did the prophets, yet you say, 'Whoever keeps my word will never taste death.' Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? Or the prophets, who died? Who do you make yourself out to be?" Jesus answered, "If I glorify myself, my glory is worth nothing; but it is my Father who glorifies me, of whom you say, 'He is our God.' You do not know him, but I know him. And if I should say that I do not know him, I would be like you a liar. But I do know him and I keep his word. Abraham your father rejoiced to see my day; he saw it and was glad. So the Jews said to him, "You are not yet fifty years old and you have seen Abraham?" Jesus said to them, "Amen, amen, I say to you, before Abraham came to be, I AM." So they picked up stones to throw at him; but Jesus hid and went out of the temple area.

«Abraham your father rejoiced to see my day; he saw it and was glad»

Fr. Enric CASES i Martín
(Barcelona, Spain)

Today, Saint John places us before Jesus' revelation in the Temple. Our Savior reveals something unknown to the Jews: that Abraham looked forward and rejoiced when he saw Jesus' day. They all knew God had made a promise to Abraham, by assuring him of great promises of salvation for his seed. However, they were unaware of how far God's light could reach. Christ reveals to them that Abraham did see the Messiah in the day of Yahweh, which Jesus calls my day.

In this revelation, Jesus appears as having God's eternal vision. But, above all, He appears as someone preexistent and present in Abraham's time. Later, in the heat of

the discussion, when the Jews said to Jesus that He is not yet fifty years old, He tells them: “Amen, amen, I say to you, before Abraham came to be, I AM.” (Jn 8:58). This is a notorious statement of his divinity, which they could perfectly understand, and which they could have also believed, had they better known the Father. The expression “I am” is part of the holy Tetragrammaton Yahweh revealed to Moses in mount Sinai.

Christianity is much more than a collection of high moral norms, as can be perfect love, or even, forgiveness. Christianity is faith in one person. Jesus Christ is True God and True Man. «Perfect God and Perfect Man», says the Athanasian Symbol. Saint Hilary of Poitiers writes in a beautiful prayer: «Give us, therefore, a way to express ourselves in an adequate and dignified manner, to enlighten our intelligence, and make also our words to express our faith, that is, that we, who, through the prophets and the Apostles, had come to know You God Father and the unique Lord Jesus Christ, may also celebrate You as our God, in which there is no unicity of person and confess your Son, in everything equal to You».