

Friday of the Fifth Week of Lent

Gospel text (Jn 10:31-42): The Jews picked up rocks to stone Jesus. Jesus answered them, “I have shown you many good works from my Father. For which of these are you trying to stone me?” The Jews answered him, “We are not stoning you for a good work but for blasphemy. You, a man, are making yourself God.” Jesus answered them, “Is it not written in your law, ‘I said, ‘You are gods’”? If it calls them gods to whom the word of God came, and Scripture cannot be set aside, can you say that the one whom the Father has consecrated and sent into the world blasphemes because I said, ‘I am the Son of God’? If I do not perform my Father’s works, do not believe me; but if I perform them, even if you do not believe me, believe the works, so that you may realize and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father.” Then they tried again to arrest him; but he escaped from their power.

He went back across the Jordan to the place where John first baptized, and there he remained. Many came to him and said, “John performed no sign, but everything John said about this man was true.” And many there began to believe in him.

“For which of these are you trying to stone me?”

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Today, Friday, when there is only one week to go to commemorate our Lord's death, the Gospel presents us with the motives of his condemnation. Jesus tries to show the truth to the Jews, but they consider him to be a blasphemer and want to stone him. Jesus tells them about the works He is doing, the works of his Father that bestow

credit to him, about why He can use the title of the “Son of God”... Nevertheless, He speaks from a level which is difficult to assimilate by his adversaries: “to be with the truth”, “to listen to his voice”... He speaks to them from the submission and commitment to his Person that make Jesus to be known and loved —“Rabbi, where are you staying?” (Jn 1:38)—, his disciples asked him at the beginning of his ministry. But, it all seems pointless: what Jesus is trying to say is so big they cannot fully understand it; only the small and humble ones will understand him, for the Kingdom is hidden from the wise and the learned.

Jesus struggles to present arguments that may be acceptable for the Jews, but to no avail. In fact, He will die because He is saying the truth about Himself, because He is faithful to Himself, to his identity and to his mission. As a prophet, He will present a claim for conversion and will be rejected, a new face of God and will be spitted at, a new fraternity and He will be forsaken.

Once more, our Lord's Cross emerges with all its strength as a true banner, as the one and only unquestionably reason: “O admirable virtue of the Holy Cross! O ineffable glory of the Father! We can see in it our Lord's Tribunal, the judgment of this World and the power of Christ Crucified. O, yes, my Lord: you have drawn towards you all things when, all day long you have held out your hands to an obstinate and rebellious people (cf. Is 65:2), the whole Universe will realize it had to pay tribute to your majesty!” (Saint Leo the Great). Jesus had to escape to the other side of the Jordan and those that truly believe in him went to him quite willing to follow him and listen to Him.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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“I believe, in order to understand; and I understand, the better to believe.” (Saint Augustine)

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“So many people were in close contact with Jesus and they did not believe... If your heart is always closed, faith doesn't enter! Instead God the Father draws us to Jesus: it is we who open or close our hearts.” (Francis)

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“The signs worked by Jesus attest that the Father has sent him. They invite belief in him. To those who turn to him in faith, he grants what they ask. So miracles strengthen faith in the One who does his Father's works; they bear witness that he is the Son of God (cf. Jn 10:31-38).”
(Catechism Of The Catholic Church, N° 548)