

Friday 5th of Lent

Gospel text (Jn 10,31-42): The Jews then picked up stones to throw at him; so Jesus said, «I have openly done many good works among you which the Father gave me to do. For which of these do you stone me?». The Jews answered, «We are not stoning you for doing a good work but for insulting God; you are only a man and you make yourself God». Then Jesus replied, «Is this not written in your Law: I said: you are gods? So those who received this word of God were called gods and the Scripture is always true. Then what should be said of the one anointed and sent into the world by the Father? Am I insulting God when I say: ‘I am the Son of God’? If I am not doing the works of my Father, do not believe me. But if I do them, even if you have no faith in me, believe because of the works I do, and know that the Father is in me and I in the Father». Again they tried to arrest him, but Jesus escaped from their hands. He went away again to the other side of the Jordan, to the place where John had baptized, and there he stayed. Many people came to him and said, «John showed no miraculous signs, but he spoke of this man and everything he said was true». And many became believers in that place.

«For which of these [good works] do you 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 spat 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.