Friday of the Third Week in Advent

Gospel text (*Jn* 5:33-36): Jesus said to the Jews: “You sent emissaries to John, and he testified to the truth. I do not accept testimony from a human being, but I say this so that you may be saved. John 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.”

”John was a burning and shining lamp”

Fr. Rafel FELIPE i Freije
(Girona, Spain)

Today, we Christians have a lot to learn from John the Baptist. Jesus compares him to the fire that burns and gives light: “He was a burning and shining lamp” (Jn 5:35). His mission, like ours, was to prepare the way of the Master: to flatten the hearts so that only Christ would shine, to announce that, if we faithfully follow Jesus Christ, a full Life is possible. John is the voice crying out in the desert: “Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.” (Mt 3:3). The Son of God comes to earth to rest in our hearts. —But… in my heart my freedom commands, and He is asking me “permission” to get in: this is why the difficult path leading to the human heart must be “flattened”. “Our hearts should be as much prepared for the coming of Christ as if he were still to come into this world” (St. Charles Borromeo).

Today we are asked to learn from St. John. This is not easy. Our self-renunciation and sacrifice, our commitment, the Truth… they are not fashionable today. There are many people who only react to money, pleasure, comfort, lies…? We must keep our heart clean and clear of things. Otherwise, neither Jesus nor other people can find any room in there.

But the Gospel is our way to Truth and happiness. Only God's Truth can set us free, even though this may mean persecution or even death. John the Baptist not only surmised it, but he assumed it, for this was his mission. His baptism was liberating and his words inviting to conversion, the path to get there.

Jesus finds His way easy, prepared, and ripe by the Baptist's penitence. His deeds bear witness He is the envoy. He already finds hearts repented and humbled by John's testimony. The Master has only words of praise for him.

Hopefully they are the same words for each of us. Particularly if we have been able to point out the Master, presenting him and, at the same time, disappearing ourselves.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “In him you will find even more than what you ask for and deseire.” (St. John of the Cross)

- “Do we choose the path of Jesus Christ? Go there: encountering the Lord again and to continue down this beautiful path, on which he must increase and we must decrease.” (Francis)

- “Christ invited people to faith and conversion, but never coerced them. For he bore witness to the truth but refused to use force to impose it on those who spoke against it. His kingdom grows by the love with which Christ, lifted up on the cross, draws men to himself.” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, № 160)