

3. May 2024

Jesus: the way, the truth and the life

Jn 14:6-14

Gospel on the Feast of the Apostles Philip and James

Jesus said: I am the Way; I am Truth and Life. No one can come to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father too. From this moment you know him and have seen him. Philip said, 'Lord, show us the Father and then we shall be satisfied.' Jesus said to him, 'Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? 'Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father, so how can you say, "Show us the Father"? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? What I say to you I do not speak of my own accord: it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his works. You must believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe it on the evidence of these works. In all truth I tell you, whoever believes in me will perform the same works as I do myself, and will perform even greater works, because I am going to the Father. Whatever you ask in my name I will do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.

In today's Gospel, Jesus pronounces those significant words, which will remain valid until the End of Time: *"I am the Way; I am Truth and Life. No one can come to the Father except through me"*.

Whoever reads the Holy Scriptures attentively, will know that these words of the Lord are true and do not tolerate any relativisation. They are words that lead to a decision: do we remain faithful to the Lord's mission and to His words, or not? These words cannot be reinterpreted in any other sense, without hurting truth or love.

Unfortunately it has to be said that what should be taken for granted in the Catholic faith is increasingly fading away. Therefore, although everyone is supposed to know and firmly believe these words of the Lord, today they must be repeated with insistence: *"I am the Way; I am Truth and Life. No one can come to the Father except through me"*.

Indeed, these words - together with the missionary mandate which the Lord gave to His disciples, sending them into the whole world (Mt 28:19-20) - are precisely the foundation of all authentic evangelisation and mission. Only through Jesus do we come to the Father, only through Him can we truly know God, only in Him do we find the fullness of truth!

According to the Lord's words, there can be no union with God except through Him. Every man needs the forgiveness of sins and the new birth in the Holy Spirit, which are gifts that the Lord has given us.

Jesus' words show us that truth is more than the realities we learn about God. The truth is a person: it is Jesus, i.e. God Himself. Only by following Him can we awaken to the full truth! It is possible that even before the encounter with Jesus, it was possible to know or intuit part of the truth, thanks to what God has sown in people's hearts or even in certain aspects of religions and philosophies. However, the fullness of truth can only be found in the encounter with Jesus.

Let us think of the Jews. They certainly have a greater knowledge of God than the other religions, thanks to the special history He wrote with them. They know the Scriptures, the prophets, the promises... However, they have not yet come to the fullness of the truth that God had prepared in the Old Covenant and brought to fulfilment in the coming of His Son Jesus.

Again and again the Lord emphasises that He comes to bring men the life of God, that is, eternal life. He Himself becomes food, and in so many ways He wants us to understand that He is Life itself. To know Him is to live, for through Him we can know God, who communicates His life to us.

The Lord makes us another great promise in today's Gospel, which will be fulfilled if we believe, or at least if we allow ourselves to be convinced by His works: *"whoever believes in me will perform the same works as I do myself, and will perform even greater works, because I am going to the Father"*.

The Lord's work of salvation continues throughout history: through word and deed, all peoples are to learn of the Redemption wrought by Christ. This Good News is not limited to the people of Israel. Thus, we see a St. Paul, who sets out to transmit the

Gospel, carrying out the works of the Lord and founding many new Christian communities. The number of disciples grows. Certainly the work of redemption is the greatest work, which can never be surpassed; however, considering its expansion and the number of people who accept it, this work has become even greater than in the time of Jesus' earthly life.

The promise of the Lord stands. Just today, with the help of modern technology, the message of the gospel can spread widely. Just look at how large an audience the earlier Popes of our time were able to have in order to bear witness to Jesus.

Today as two thousand years ago, Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life. This is the proclamation that must reach the whole world!