

31. January 2025

THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN
“No man ever spoke like this man!”

Jn 7:37-53

On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and proclaimed, “If any one thirst, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as[a] the scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water.’” Now this he said about the Spirit, which those who believed in him were to receive; for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. When they heard these words, some of the people said, “This is really the prophet.” Others said, “This is the Christ.” But some said, “Is the Christ to come from Galilee? Has not the scripture said that the Christ is descended from David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?” So there was a division among the people over him. Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him. The officers then went back to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, “Why did you not bring him?” The officers answered, “No man ever spoke like this man!” The Pharisees answered them, “Are you led astray, you also? Have any of the authorities or of the Pharisees believed in him? But this crowd, who do not know the law, are accursed.” Nicodemus, who had gone to him before, and who was one of them, said to them, “Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does?” They replied, “Are you from Galilee too? Search and you will see that no prophet is to rise from Galilee.” They went each to his own house,

We had already heard that Jesus decided to go up to Jerusalem for the feast after all, even if He did so secretly at first. We also heard that there were different opinions about Him among the people. There were Jews who were inclined to believe in the Lord. The invitation He gave publicly on the most solemn day of the feast moved the people. He spoke to them of the rivers of living water that would flow from within those who believed in Him. It was a prediction of the Spirit that would come when people believed in the Son of God.

The same is true to this day: when the Heavenly Father draws us to acknowledge Jesus as Lord and to believe in Him, the Spirit of God is poured out upon us and wants to shape our whole life according to the Divine Will. We ourselves become witnesses of

this process and, as we allow ourselves to be transformed by Him, the Holy Spirit can also act through us and reach out to others.

Some in the crowd listening to Him believed that Jesus was the promised prophet; others even said that He was the Christ. The latter came to the right conclusion, convinced by Jesus' words and deeds. But we also see that others among the people shared the view of the religious leaders and Pharisees, who said that Jesus could not be the Messiah because He came from Galilee, when the Scriptures said instead that He must have come from the line of David and from Bethlehem, David's town. Some people wanted to arrest Jesus, and the chief priests sent marshals to carry out this purpose. But the hour had not yet come for Jesus to be handed over. Therefore, no one could lay hands on Him.

This gives us the certainty that everything is in the hands of the Heavenly Father. Even if men and the authorities who represent them have contrary intentions and want to carry them out, it is God who decides whether it happens or not, whether He actively wills it or allows it for reasons known only to Himself.

Jesus' hour had not yet come, and instead of arresting Him, the officers were so moved by His words that they did not lay a hand on Him. They even became witnesses before those who had sent them, saying, "*Never has a man spoken like this.*" With these words they expressed their deep shock and explained that they had not been able to lay hands on Him.

But this testimony, which might have given pause to the authorities bent on Jesus' death, did not move them. Not even the objection of Nicodemus, a well-known teacher who had visited Jesus at night, had any effect on them: "*Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does?*"

They simply emphasised that Jesus was from Galilee and that, according to the Scriptures, no prophet comes from there. But it is obvious that this was a pretext. They had already decided that Jesus had to die, and nothing and no one could change their minds.

And what about Jesus?

He was not dissuaded in His way either. How different their ways were! Jesus, even when threatened with persecution and violent death, continued to bring true life, the good news of the Father who had sent Him, wherever He went. His enemies, on the other hand, tried to trap Him and entangle Him in contradictions that would justify their vile intentions. But His hour had not yet come, and Jesus spent that night on the Mount of Olives.