

1. March 2025

## THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN “The peace of Christ”

Today we return to the meditations in the Gospel of John, closing chapter 14:

Jn 14:24-31

*“He who does not love me does not keep my words; and the word which you hear is not mine but the Father’s who sent me. These things I have spoken to you, while I am still with you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. You heard me say to you, ‘I go away, and I will come to you.’ If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I go to the Father; for the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place, you may believe. I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no power over me; but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Rise, let us go hence.”*

The Word of God entails the decision whether we open ourselves to it and thus opt for the truth, or whether we deliberately close ourselves off. To respond to the truth means to decide for Jesus, to love Him and to follow His Word. Whoever rejects the truth excludes himself from the grace that has been prepared for him. This is because the word that comes from the mouth of Jesus comes from the Father Himself, addressed first of all to the Jews, who, as the chosen people, should be the first to understand and assimilate it and then take it to the whole world. To do this, they need the assistance of the Holy Spirit, the infallible Teacher whom the Father and the Son will send so that the Gospel may be proclaimed with authority and in truth in the light of God, and so that people may come to faith. Nothing that Jesus said should be forgotten. The Holy Spirit will not only remind us of it, but will impel missionaries to go to the ends of the earth and proclaim salvation in Christ. He himself will be the soul of the Church, which will be made up of Jews and Gentiles under one head, who is Christ.

Jesus then speaks of the peace He will give. It is different from the peace that the world offers. It is first and foremost the peace of God, that is, the peace that comes from living according to His will. Without this there can be no true peace, for every transgression of God's law, as long as it has not been atoned for and forgiven, represents a serious disturbance of the holy order He has established for His creation.

Therefore, Jesus is the true Prince of Peace (cf. Is 9:6), for through His blood the sinner is reconciled to God (Col 1:19-20), by accepting Him as his Lord and following in His footsteps.

We see, then, what is the root of all discord and who is the One who alone can heal it at the root, by leading back to the Father the men He has given Him (Jn 17:24), pulling out the bitter root from them and sending in its place the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit brings divine love into the depths of our being and re-establishes our relationship with God. He accompanies, guides and sustains man on his way to eternity. Jesus left this great comfort to His disciples so that their hearts would not be troubled or discouraged. This promise is still valid today.

Next, Jesus speaks of His return to the Father. Soon He will have accomplished His mission in the world and He invites His disciples to rejoice with Him, for nothing could be more beautiful for Him than to return to the Father and bring to Him the souls of all those whom God has entrusted to Him. All those who will listen to His word and believe in Him until the end of time are the prize of the victory Jesus won on the cross. But, before this happens, the prince of this world will want to consummate his work of hostility and destruction. In his blindness, he ignores that God will use everything he does to make Christ's unique sacrifice on Calvary a source of life for all men. The devil does not know that in deceiving others, he falls into his own deception. He does not know that his apparent victories always carry within them the seeds of defeat, for they are won in rebellion against God and are corroded by envy and hatred. Nor does he know that he will not be the one in command in the events of Calvary, but that Jesus will willingly assume death for the salvation of mankind. The prince of this world has no power over Jesus.

The devil is unaware of all this, so that he unknowingly serves God's plan of salvation, in which the abyss of evil is countered by the most supreme act of love. The cruel death on the cross will become the shining sign of God's love and the unsurpassed testimony

of the goodness of the One who came to redeem mankind. The world must recognise that Jesus suffers this death out of love for His heavenly Father and to fulfil His mission. Thus this sign will be erected for ever, so that, when He is lifted up on earth, the Lord may draw all to Himself (Jn 12:32).