

18. February 2025

## THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN

“The time has come”

Jn 12:25-33

*He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If any one serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there shall my servant be also; if any one serves me, the Father will honor him. “Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, for this purpose I have come to this hour. Father, glorify thy name.” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” The crowd standing by heard it and said that it had thundered. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the ruler of this world be cast out; and I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.” He said this to show by what death he was to die.*

With these words, spoken in view of His approaching death, Jesus offers a valuable teaching about true life to all those who want to follow Him seriously. The Lord insistently points out that human life is not limited to the earthly dimension. Therefore, man must not focus his aspirations on this fleeting life, nor must he remain in the enjoyment of it. In doing so, he closes himself off from the transcendental dimension of his existence and becomes increasingly insensitive and less and less receptive to the spiritual reality, to life in God. Indeed, it only makes sense to those who seek *‘the things that are above, not the things that are on earth’* (Col 3:2); that is, to those who seek God and the deeper purpose He has set for their lives. If they try to live according to God's will, the gates of the Kingdom of Heaven are opened to them.

To us, men, the invitation is extended to serve the Son of God, and so, by God's grace, the divine life unfolds in us and we find our home where the Lord Himself has it: in unbreakable union with Jesus and our heavenly Father. This already begins to become a reality in our earthly life and reaches its fullness in eternity, where we will be forever with God and behold Him face to face. If we follow the Son of God, the Father will honour us, for that is His holy will for all men.

Jesus' soul is troubled. He knows that His passion and death on Calvary awaits Him. In the midst of this shock, He utters words of salvation that allow us to take a deep look into His heart full of love: *'what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, for this purpose I have come to this hour!'*

Jesus does not flee when death approaches Him with all its physical and spiritual pain, when the betrayal of one of the disciples could tear His heart, when the King of heaven and earth is mocked and scorned by those for whom He came into the world to open the gates of heaven to them. Could He now ask the Father to deliver Him from this hour of pain and cease to fulfil His mission?

No, Jesus' love is too great to turn back: He loves the Father, whose will He wants to fulfil without reserve, and He loves men, who without Him would not find the way of salvation which He obtained for them by His faithfulness and sacrifice.

Jesus wants to glorify the Father and therefore exclaims loudly, *'Father, glorify your name!'* And from heaven comes the Father's reply, *'I have glorified it and I will glorify it again.'* Those present were perplexed by what they had just heard. They did not understand the words, but they sensed the dialogue between Jesus and His Father.

Now the Lord speaks very clearly of what will happen when His hour has come: *'Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the ruler of this world be cast out.'*

Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil (1 Jn 3:8). The devil has power over people who live in sin, and it is this dominion that Jesus breaks on the cross. By atoning for sin by His voluntary death and cancelling the charge against us by nailing it to the cross (Col 2:14), each person can obtain forgiveness for his or her sins by virtue of this sacrifice. Thus, the *'accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night'* (Rev 12:10) was hurried away and his power over men was broken, as long as they embrace faith in the Son of God.

Once the Lord gives His life on the cross, His redeeming love will draw men to Himself. It is love that transforms everything, that drives away darkness and makes the light of God shine in the hearts of men.

Jesus foretold what would happen and His disciples had to listen to Him so that later on they would remember all that He had said and what was fulfilled before their eyes. Also for us, so many centuries later, it is a proof of the authenticity of Jesus' testimony, for all people until the end of time must be led to Him. The Lord wants to draw everyone to Himself, and this invitation is still valid today!