

20. February 2025

THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN
“The word of Jesus judges”

Jn 12:44-50

Jesus cried out and said, “He who believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me. And he who sees me sees him who sent me. I have come as light into the world, that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness. If any one hears my sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. He who rejects me and does not receive my sayings has a judge; the word that I have spoken will be his judge on the last day. For I have not spoken on my own authority; the Father who sent me has himself given me commandment what to say and what to speak. And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has bidden me.”

Many people still do not understand the significance of Jesus' coming into the world, first for the Jews, who had been waiting centuries for the Messiah, and then for all people. Some may think that religion is simply a private matter, suitable only for those who are attracted to it.

However, if we look at mankind, we will find that, in one way or another, most people are searching for God, and this longing is deeply rooted in their hearts, for God Himself planted it in them. Many people do not yet know the truth and have not yet received or assimilated the Gospel message. Even if they possess the light of understanding, by virtue of which they can conclude the existence of God and recognise Him in the works of creation (cf. Rom 1:20), they have not yet had that personal encounter with the Lord which He, in His goodness, arranged for each one and which is so necessary for everyone without exception. Quite a few people have been instructed in other religions and therefore have not yet received the grace of the encounter with Jesus, so that their knowledge of God may still be very diffuse or they are deceived by idols. In any case, their religion is not the true one.

Jesus, sent by our Heavenly Father, announces with conviction that He is the Son of God and therefore the awaited Messiah. His coming implies judgement for the world.

Jesus insists again and again that those who believe in Him are drawn by God the Father and follow the truth.

In today's passage, He tells us even more precisely: the word that Jesus speaks at the behest of the heavenly Father is the truth. This is what is decisive for every person. Whoever opens himself to the truth, opens the door to the light that came into the world. This light is Jesus Himself, who enlightens every person who comes into the world (Jn 1:9). Whoever lets it in, no longer remains in the darkness of sin, but awakens from the shadows of ignorance or misunderstanding about God and leaves confusion and deception behind. In the Person of Jesus, the soul finds the truth for which she was created and which begins to transform everything. If she believes in the Son of God, divine life awakens in her. Under the influence of divine grace, she will listen to the words of Jesus and follow them. Then God's holy plan for her life begins to be fulfilled. Thanks to the work of the Holy Spirit, the person awakens to the truth of his or her divine sonship and lives as such. The Holy Spirit, who has begun to work in the person who has embraced the faith, moulds him or her into the image of Christ.

On the other hand, if a person closes himself to the truth offered to him in Jesus, then he already has someone to judge him, as the Lord makes clear: *'He who rejects me and does not receive my sayings has a judge; the word that I have spoken will be his judge on the last day.'*

No one can live contrary to the truth without suffering very deep harm. If he deliberately closes himself to the truth, he will not only lose the meaning of his earthly life, but, as Scripture points out, he may condemn himself for all eternity and lose the imperishable life with God.

Therefore, each person must receive the message of salvation, according to the will of God. The Gospel must be proclaimed with authority and authenticity, and this is the mission that Jesus has entrusted to the Church. The truth must be proclaimed so that all people may receive the great gift of God's mercy.

Precisely in the present time this has become very possible thanks to the wide diffusion of the media, even if it is also necessary for missionaries to go to the different places in person so that people can have access to the sacraments, whenever possible.

Just as Jesus never hesitates to emphasise that He was sent by the Heavenly Father, so the Church cannot forget that evangelisation is the divine mandate to be fulfilled. She must always be aware of this in order to avoid the danger of adapting to the spirit of the world and of relativising or even abandoning the truth entrusted to her for the sake of a false unity. If this were to happen, she would have failed in her mission.

On the contrary, it is necessary for her to carry forward the mission which the Lord received from His Father so that men may encounter the truth and thus attain salvation.