

3. March 2025

THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN  
“They hated me without a cause”

Jn 15:19-27

*“If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also. But all this they will do to you on my account, because they do not know him who sent me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. He who hates me hates my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin; but now they have seen and hated both me and my Father. It is to fulfil the word that is written in their law, ‘They hated me without a cause.’ But when the Counselor comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness to me; and you also are witnesses, because you have been with me from the beginning.*

In yesterday's passage, Jesus made it clear to His disciples that it was He who chose them. This applies to every vocation. The Lord chooses His own and in this certainty we can lean and trust, especially when we are going through personal crises.

This choice brings with it the hatred of the world against the disciples of Jesus, for the simple fact that they follow the Lord and do not submit to the spirit and the prince of this world. They belong to God and, therefore, the distance to a world far away from Him automatically arises. In the Church today, we often no longer want to hear about this distance of the Christian from the world. Instead, there is a danger of adapting more and more to the spirit of the world. Some are even so confused that they think that the renewal of the Church would come from this adaptation to the world and that thus more people would be won for Christ. What a mistake! With such steps, you may be able to escape the hatred of the world, but you also no longer have any relevant message to convey to it and end up becoming a part of it. We cannot overlook the fact

that such tendencies can be perceived today: a Church adapted to the world that loses the salt and obscures the light of Christ that is to shine through it.

On the other hand, those who hold to the Word and the Law of the Lord have to experience the hostility of the world and suffer persecution for Jesus' sake. It has been so from the beginning and will continue to be so until the end, for it is a deadly enmity driven by the powers of darkness. It is important to realise that there is no objective reason for this hatred, as we clearly see in the case of Jesus. "*He committed no sin; no guile was found on his lips.*" (1 Pet 2:22), He proclaimed the word of the Father and glorified Him by His signs and wonders in the service of men. However, He received in return the hatred of those who should have been the first to recognise Him.

All that Jesus did testifies against His persecutors. They heard His words and saw works that no other did. Therefore, they have no excuse for their sin. Jesus makes it clear: 'They have hated me and also my Father.'

These words of Jesus need to be faced. In the Gospel according to John the enmity of the world against God is brought out in a particular way. When we listen to various gospel accounts, we perhaps do not sufficiently realise what it means that the chosen people, and in particular their religious leaders, have indulged in this deadly enmity against Jesus, the Son of God. None of this is normal, none of this is understandable, none of this has any objective justification.

Although we see again and again in the history of Israel a stubborn people who fall over and over again into unfaithfulness and whose kings often do what displeases the Lord, we can and must never get used to the abysmal wickedness that comes to light in the behaviour of the religious authorities towards the Son of God and, therefore, towards His Father.

It was not God's plan that His own should not receive Him, any more than it could be God's original plan that an angel wonderfully created by Him should be perverted and become a demon hostile to Him.

Here we are confronted with the absurdity of evil, which self-destructively wants to drag everything into the abyss. Instead of becoming the first heralds and witnesses of the

long-awaited Messiah for centuries, the religious leaders of Judaism were obstinate in their hatred of Him to the point of death, for no reason at all!

Then it was the Holy Spirit, sent by the Father and the Son, who became a witness to the glory of Christ and carried His message with authority throughout the centuries. And the faithful disciples, the holy remnant of Israel, will be His witnesses to the ends of the earth. To this day this witness must continue to be passed on, never to be extinguished. In this way, unfounded and senseless hatred of God is countered by His infinite love and mercy, so that, if possible, all may be converted to Him and have their sins forgiven.