

5. March 2025

THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN “True joy”

Jn 16:16-24

“A little while, and you will see me no more; again a little while, and you will see me.” Some of his disciples said to one another, “What is this that he says to us, ‘A little while, and you will not see me, and again a little while, and you will see me’; and, ‘because I go to the Father?’” They said, “What does he mean by ‘a little while’? We do not know what he means.” Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him; so he said to them, “Is this what you are asking yourselves, what I meant by saying, ‘A little while, and you will not see me, and again a little while, and you will see me’? Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy. When a woman is in travail she has sorrow, because her hour has come; but when she is delivered of the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a child is born into the world. So you have sorrow now, but I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you. In that day you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask anything of the Father, he will give it to you in my name. Hitherto you have asked nothing in my name; ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

In His farewell discourse Jesus continues to prepare His disciples for His departure. While the world, far from God, will rejoice at His death, the disciples will weep and mourn. But when they witness His resurrection, their grief will turn to joy. Though they will be confused by His arrest and crucifixion, though they will not yet understand many of the things He is now telling them, their sorrow will give way to a joy that will last forever.

The disciples did not follow a false prophet, but the One sent by the Father. Therefore, Jesus' words will be fulfilled in them: no one will be able to take away the joy of knowing Him and of having followed Him. It is the same joy that we experience today when we follow Jesus and live according to the truth. There are so many voices in the world that demand our attention, but only one thing is essential: to listen to the Son of God and to receive His grace.

If we hold fast to this certainty, we will be able to endure in these troubled times and even come out strengthened. At a time when external securities are disappearing and crumbling before our very eyes, our relationship with the Lord becomes even more intimate. We can ask the Father in the name of Jesus and know that we are sheltered in that wonderful union between the Father and the Son. Here we find the inexhaustible source of joy, and there is nothing more important for man than to live in this unity.

Let us remember that the Lord gives these consoling instructions to His disciples just before His death. Judas had already set out to betray Jesus and His enemies were determined to kill Him. The Lord has little time left to encourage His disciples, and this is what He does in His last hours. Indeed, His imminent death is not the failure of His mission, as His enemies would have it, but its fulfilment, the source from which new life for humanity will flow.

Not a few of the faithful see the current crisis in the Church as a kind of "crucifixion" of the Mystical Body of Christ, in which the Judas spirit of betrayal also manifests itself. They note with concern how modernist influences are weakening the Church, causing her to stray further and further from her path, sometimes to the point of becoming unrecognisable.

In such times it is important to cling even more to the words of Jesus and to stand firm in the truth. The Word of the Lord and the authentic teaching of the Church are the means by which the faithful can emerge strengthened from existential crises such as the present one, just as the disciples, by the grace of God, remained faithful to the Lord in spite of their weakness. In the name of Jesus, we can ask the Father for this fidelity and put it into practice day after day. He will grant it to us!

Let us remember that the criterion by which we are governed is not the world, but the Lord and Sacred Scripture, which admonishes us: *"Put not your trust in princes, in a son of man, in whom there is no help"* (Ps 146:3).

We must therefore raise our eyes and not allow ourselves to be confused by the dense shadow that hangs over the world and the Church. This is precisely what the Lord wanted His disciples to do, knowing that the betrayal of Judas and all that followed would be a severe test for them. At such times, the Lord is very close to His faithful,

who will be deeply grateful for having been found worthy to withstand such trials and to remain faithful to Him (cf. Acts 5:41).