

8. March 2025

## THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN

### “Jesus' last words before His Passion”

Jn 17:13-26

*“But now I am coming to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them thy word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I do not pray that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; thy word is truth. As thou didst send me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be consecrated in truth. “I do not pray for these only, but also for those who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. The glory which thou hast given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and thou in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that thou hast sent me and hast loved them even as thou hast loved me. Father, I desire that they also, whom thou hast given me, may be with me where I am, to behold my glory which thou hast given me in thy love for me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world has not known thee, but I have known thee; and these know that thou hast sent me. I made known to them thy name, and I will make it known, that the love with which thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.”*

These are the last words of the Lord before He is taken prisoner. His enemies have it all planned and are just waiting for the moment to seize Him. Judas will not be long in handing Him over to them.

But before that hour, the Lord speaks to His Father about His beloved disciples, whom He will leave in the world to fulfil their mission. His last words are not to plunge them into mourning, but to fill them with the joy of Jesus and give them hope. It is about

the joy of knowing God and serving Him. This is the great gift and, at the same time, the mission of the disciples.

Since they belong to God, they will be hated by the world, as their Lord was. So it will be until men are sincerely converted to God and delivered from the clutches of darkness. When the divine light penetrates them, they will perceive the goodness of God and all their distorted images of Him will be dispelled. Especially the false fear of God, which the devil instils in us to destroy our trust in our Heavenly Father, must be overcome.

Jesus does not yet take the disciples with Him on His return to the Father. They must still remain in the world, in that hostile environment which often opposes God. However, the Lord does ask the Father to protect them from evil. Thus, their journey in this world becomes a time of trial to prove their faithfulness to God.

It is the same for us who follow Jesus today. The world is the place where we must fulfil our task. We can firmly count on the Lord's prayer for us, asking to be protected from evil. We are called to live in the truth, that is, to abide in His Word without straying. At the same time, we are sent into the world to bear witness to the truth in the service of our Heavenly Father and His divine Son. There is no more important task than this, for people need to know the truth, and for this the Lord's messengers are necessary.

Jesus' prayer for His disciples includes all those who will believe in Him through their word. Already then, the Lord had us in view, and He still sees us today as we strive to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth (Mt 5:13-14).

Jesus speaks again and again of the unity of the disciples with Him and with the Father, which is a great witness to this world. We know well how much damage has been done to unity among Christians. Today attempts are made to create unity among people, both inside and outside the Church. However, it is important to stress that true unity can only exist in truth. It cannot arise outside of God, but only where people live in accordance with God's will and adhere to the unity between the Father and the Son. It is this unity that the Lord refers to in His priestly prayer. Any other does not last and is just as brittle as that peace which the world offers.

Once again, Jesus addresses to His Father the desire for His disciples to behold His glory, which He received from Him before the creation of the world. This desire will

be fulfilled in eternal life in all those who have completed their earthly race in the grace of God. Although here on earth we hardly see 'as in a mirror, dimly' (1 Cor 13:12), it is already wonderful what we glimpse of the glory of Jesus by faith. But what awaits us is overwhelming and will fill us with eternal bliss. Then all that Jesus asked of the Father for us will be fulfilled: that the love with which He is loved by God may dwell in us and He in us.

In the next chapter, we will enter into the Passion of Jesus taking with us these words of farewell from Our Lord.