

26. April 2025

## THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN “John, the witness”

*Jn 21:20-25*

*Peter turned and saw following them the disciple whom Jesus loved, who had lain close to his breast at the supper and had said, “Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?” When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, “Lord, what about this man?” Jesus said to him, “If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? Follow me!” The saying spread abroad among the brethren that this disciple was not to die; yet Jesus did not say to him that he was not to die, but, “If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?” This is the disciple who is bearing witness to these things, and who has written these things; and we know that his testimony is true. But there are also many other things which Jesus did; were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.*

What will become of him, of John? What will become of the disciple whom Jesus loved and who, because of his love, knew Him better than the others? He was the same disciple whom Peter beckoned at the Last Supper to ask the question that no one else would have dared to ask: “*Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?*” It was also he who stood by the cross of Jesus and to whom Jesus entrusted His mother before He died, “*and from that hour the disciple took her to his own home*” (Jn 19:27).

John obviously had a special position among the disciples. When he recognised Jesus by the lake, as we heard in yesterday's passage, and exclaimed, “It is the Lord”, it was a fact for Peter and the other disciples. His testimony was certain and there was no need to ask again. If John had said it, it was so. Such clarity and insight are found in all the books of the New Testament attributed to John. The wonderful Gospel on which we have meditated with such spiritual benefit in recent months also comes from the disciple whom Jesus loved, and Scripture itself attests that his testimony is true.

The Lord had foreseen a somewhat different path for John. He was the only one of the apostles who, according to tradition, did not suffer martyrdom by blood. From the

island of Patmos, where he was exiled, he bequeathed to us the Book of Revelation, which he received in a vision: *"I John, your brother, who share with you in Jesus the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus"* (Rev 1:9).

With this last meditation we conclude this series in which we have systematically gone through the Gospel of John, in the knowledge that, as the Evangelist himself says, it contains only a small part of all that the Son of God did: There are also many other things which Jesus did; were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.

But what is recorded in the Gospels and in the other Scriptures, together with what has been handed down to us through the oral tradition of the Church, is sufficient for us to know the great plan of our Heavenly Father: it is God's Will that we believe in Him and in Jesus Christ, His Son, Whom He has sent to us. He is the Saviour of the world and the Redeemer of mankind. Whoever acknowledges and follows Him has eternal life and, if he remains faithful to the end, will be with God for all eternity. May all people recognise this and respond to God's love! For this purpose Jesus came into the world and sent His disciples. Until this message is proclaimed to the ends of the earth, God's messengers will continue to be sent.

We can never thank our Heavenly Father enough for His infinite love. But here on earth we can show our love by following His Son and then sing His praises forever with the angels and saints.