



21. March 2026
LENTEN SPIRITUAL RETREAT
Day 32: "I am the light of the world"

In today's Gospel (Jn 8:12–20), Jesus, speaking to the Jews, utters words that remain relevant for all time: "*I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.*" (v. 12)

These are words that must be deeply internalized—words that illuminate and thus communicate to us the light that is Jesus Himself. The Lord addresses them to the crowd listening to Him, even though He knows they cannot yet fully understand them. With the Pharisees, however, the situation was becoming increasingly tense.

They are repeatedly scandalized by the authority that emanates from Jesus' words—words meant to reveal to them who He was and to open the way of truth so that they might recognize Him as the Messiah. If they recognised Him as the Messiah, the door would have been opened for them to know more fully God, the Heavenly Father, who had sent Him into the world. When this path is taken, the Holy Spirit can reveal more and more of the truth to us, and our knowledge of God becomes more accurate and broader, and our love for Him grows.

Even today there are people who are scandalised by the claim that Jesus is the only way to the Father, and these words of His are often not accepted or reinterpreted. This relativisation has spread even within the Church and, unfortunately, those who should know and proclaim the truth are in danger of tarnishing it with human concepts and adapting it to the spirit of the times. With such an attitude, we may lose sight of the fact that we are actually acting on the commission of Jesus and that we are called to serve the truth that He came to proclaim to us, not to proclaim our own truth. Therefore, if we are called to be reliable witnesses of the truth, we cannot dispose of it, relativise it or modify it as we please.

In any case, Jesus does not withdraw His words in the face of opposition, but tries to explain them to His listeners. His far-reaching statement still stands: "*I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.*"

How could the Lord retract such a statement, depriving people of the hope of finding themselves before the One who can truly lead them out of darkness and into the Kingdom of God? How could the search of those who, moved by the Spirit of God,

have set out to find the One whom, even without knowing it, they have been seeking all their lives, be hindered?

How could the world, so often in ignorance of true values, be deprived of the light and simply abandoned to darkness? How could the Jews, God's chosen and beloved people, who have long awaited the One who had already come into the world, be deprived of the knowledge of Jesus as the Messiah?

Jesus makes it clear that He is the light of the world and the One sent by the Father. He also responds to the objection that since He testifies to Himself, His testimony cannot be true, by pointing out that it is the heavenly Father who testifies to Him through His words and works, and that He proceeds from Him. Therefore the testimony He gives of Himself is true.

But the Pharisees refuse to acknowledge the truth about Jesus through His words and works, and so they shut themselves off from the light. Jesus points out a major obstacle that prevents them from recognising this, an obstacle that still exists today: *"You judge according to the flesh"*. (v. 15)

This is an essential key: to recognise the Lord as the Messiah, the Son of the Father, we need the Holy Spirit. Mere natural understanding is not enough to know Jesus for who He is. If we try to grasp the Lord with our human categories, we will at best get as far as the door to knock on in order to gain deeper knowledge from there. Even to say "Jesus is Lord", in the sense of recognising Him as our Lord, we need the light of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:3).

Therefore, when we hear voices in the Church today that no longer proclaim Jesus according to the testimony He and His disciples gave throughout the centuries, it is a sign that the light of the Holy Spirit is gradually being lost and, consequently, the knowledge of God is being obscured.

In their encounter with Jesus, the Pharisees are offered the opportunity to recognise the Son and, through Him, the Father as He truly is. But their human judgement stands in the way.

They only had to listen to Him, assimilate His words, recognise His works and draw the right conclusions; then the light would penetrate them, they would become His disciples and would not close their hearts to the point of wanting to kill Him. Today people have the same opportunity. They can ask Jesus who He is and He will answer!

The flower of today's meditation is to proclaim Jesus and thus become light for the world.

Meditation on the reading of the day: <https://en.elijamission.net/innocence-or-naivete/>

Meditation on the Gospel of the day: <https://en.elijamission.net/a-free-heart/>