



11. April 2024

Jesus comes from above

Jn 3:31-36

He who comes from above is above all others; he who is of the earth is earthly himself and speaks in an earthly way. He who comes from heaven bears witness to the things he has seen and heard, but his testimony is not accepted by anybody; though anyone who does accept his testimony is attesting that God is true, since he whom God has sent speaks God's own words, for God gives him the Spirit without reserve. The Father loves the Son and has entrusted everything to his hands. Anyone who believes in the Son has eternal life, but anyone who refuses to believe in the Son will never see life: God's retribution hangs over him.

Sacred Scripture - particularly the Apostle John - wants to emphasise the difference between a life guided by the Spirit and a life led according to worldly criteria.

Indeed, there is an enormous difference between the two. The Apostle Paul even goes so far as to say that *"The natural person has no room for the gifts of God's Spirit; to him they are folly; he cannot recognise them, because their value can be assessed only in the Spirit"* (1 Cor 2:14).

The key to a better understanding of Jesus' words and witness lies in the action of the Holy Spirit, who gives Himself to us without limit. It is He who gives us the light to understand the One who *"comes from above"* and who *"is above all"*. Without the Holy Spirit, we cannot understand the Lord's words in their full dimension. Without the Holy Spirit, we would simply take from Holy Scripture historical data, ethnological information and cultural aspects; but we would not penetrate to the core of the message. Under this merely human perspective, the message of salvation, which wants to announce to us above all the love of God and His action, and to tell us how we are to live in order to walk in His light, can even be distorted.

The Apostle John spares no words to make it clear to us that Jesus is the beloved Son of God, the one sent by the Father; and that His words are the words of the Father.

We, who have received a Christian faith that has been handed down through many centuries, may find it easier to understand such statements of Jesus than the Jews of His time (in this case, Nicodemus).

However, we must ask ourselves how deeply His words have penetrated us, and whether they have transformed our way of thinking. Has the Holy Spirit penetrated us so deeply that we can abandon our earthly or worldly way of thinking and become men who "*come from above*" and see the events and things of this world from that perspective? This aspect is decisive, in order to acquire the right criteria of judgement.

It is the discernment of spirits that helps us to recognise the origin of things: do they come from God, from our own thoughts or are they inspired by demons? Sometimes these elements can also be intermingled.

Let us apply discernment to this simple example: Is Jesus the Son of God? The Holy Spirit bears witness that He is. So, if we can make this profession of faith, it is thanks to the action of the Holy Spirit, for "*nobody is able to say, 'Jesus is Lord' except in the Holy Spirit*" (1 Cor 12:3).

The human spirit, on the other hand, would present Jesus to us simply as a wise man, at best. Finally, the demonic spirit would deny Him.

In this example we can clearly recognise the difference. The Holy Spirit glorifies God; He shows us the true origin of things; He comes from above and communicates His light to us. The human spirit, on the other hand, tries to understand things on the basis of its own experience or reason, but it is unable to reach by itself the light to recognise the Son of God. Thus, the human spirit remains in its limitations, even if it can come to certain philosophical conclusions. Finally, the demonic spirit is opposed to the glory of God, for it is at enmity with the Holy Spirit.

While the Holy Spirit can judge both the human spirit and the demonic spirit, the reverse is not true (cf. 1 Cor 2:15). The human spirit, with its earthly way of thinking, does not possess any supernatural knowledge of its own. The demonic spirit flees from the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit unmasks it.

The message of the Son of God is still being fought against, and his testimony is often not accepted.

The Spirit of God leads us to obey Jesus. This is the invitation God extends to everyone who hears about Jesus. Whoever does not accept it, even though he has the possibility to do so, "*God's retribution hangs over him*", as today's Gospel says. These words indicate that he who closes himself off from God cannot see the light and therefore does not receive the grace that God has prepared for those who believe.