

7. February 2025

THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN  
“He is a prophet”

Jn 9:13-23

*They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. The Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, “He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and I see.” Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not keep the sabbath.” But others said, “How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?” There was a division among them. So they again said to the blind man, “What do you say about him, since he has opened your eyes?” He said, “He is a prophet.” The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight, until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight, and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?” His parents answered, “We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but how he now sees we do not know, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age, he will speak for himself.” His parents said this because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if any one should confess him to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, “He is of age, ask him.”*

The works of the Son of God did not inspire peace and gratitude in the hostile Pharisees. Even the extraordinary healing of a man born blind did not touch their hearts. Although they questioned the man in detail about how the healing had taken place, they did so only to accuse Jesus of not keeping the Sabbath and therefore of being a sinner.

They never gave up their position of accusing Jesus, which has a certain power over people. Setting traps for Jesus, trying to use His words and deeds against Him, persecuting Him, wanting to eliminate Him? All this shows not only a misunderstanding of the figure of Jesus, but also a growing wickedness. The Lord had already indicated the reasons why the religious leaders behaved in this way towards Him: they did not know God, their father was the devil and they were doing the works of the devil, they were closed to the light...

How did Jesus deal with the hostility towards Him, especially from the Jewish religious authorities of the time, which must have been painful for Him? Let us recall an example from the history of our Church: St. Joan of Arc was condemned by an ecclesiastical court and handed over to the enemies of her French homeland, who publicly burned her. What hurt her most, no doubt, was that it was the representatives of the Church she loved who condemned her.

Jesus always tries to win over those who oppose Him. He refutes their unjust accusations and shows them their own errors. Although He sometimes hides Himself from their reach, He never makes the slightest concession to His preaching, nor does He refrain from working miracles, even knowing that they could be interpreted against Him.

Since we, as His disciples, have Jesus as our model in everything, it is important that we understand and apply this attitude of His in our lives.

We can never deny the truth of our faith out of human respect, much less renounce it for fear of the persecutions that may befall us. We can certainly face the situations that may come our way, as the Lord Himself did, but we must be moved by the virtue of prudence and not by the desire to protect ourselves.

At the same time, we must imitate the patience and love of the Lord, who never ceases to tell people the truth so that they may accept the grace that the heavenly Father offers them by sending His Son.

The blind man who was healed drew the right conclusion, in that he was able to recognise Jesus at that moment, and when the Pharisees asked him what he thought of Him, he had the courage to confess: "*He is a prophet*".

As we can see, such a confession had consequences, as we can see from the reaction of the man's parents. When the Jews also questioned them to find out more details, the parents gave evasive answers. The Gospel tells us why: "*His parents said this because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if any one should confess him to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue.*"

This was a very drastic measure, for to be expelled from the community of the faithful meant isolation and separation from others, a kind of 'Jewish excommunication'.

In today's passage we can already see what awaited those who recognised and confessed Jesus as the Messiah. The deadly hostility of the religious leaders towards the Son of God created an atmosphere of fear among the Jews. If they recognised Him as the Messiah, or were about to do so, they did not dare to testify publicly. The truth suffered persecution, as it does to this day. The father of lies, the 'murderer from the beginning', did not rest. But there were those who chose the love of Jesus over their own lives, and there will be until the end of time.