

Tuesday's Gospel: Why is it Good that Jesus Go Away?

Gospel (*Jn* 16:5-11)

Jesus said to his disciples:

“But now I am going to him who sent me; yet none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your hearts. Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convince the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment:

concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no more; concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.”

Commentary

In the intimacy of the Last Supper, our Lord, who knows that his disciples will abandon him during his passion and death on the Cross, offers them the promise of sending the Holy Spirit, the Advocate and Comforter.

We may be a little surprised by the firmness with which Jesus tells them that it is better for him to leave, since otherwise the Spirit will not come to them. We don't know very well whether the apostles would understand this “going away” of our

Lord as something definitive, in clear reference to his death and his subsequent Ascension. But in any case they would have been upset at the thought of “losing” our Lord forever.

Like the apostles, we too sometimes don’t understand God’s way of acting in our own lives, in the lives of others, or even in the world and in history.

On these occasions, we can remember Saint Paul’s words: “we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose” (*Rom 8:28*). And the best thing for his disciples at that moment was for the Paraclete to come.

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