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Tuesday's Gospel: On Our Lord's Wavelength

Gospel for Tuesday in the 5th
Week of Lent, and commentary.

Gospel (*Jn 8:21-30*)

Jesus said to the Pharisees:, “I go away, and you will seek me and die in your sin; where I am going, you cannot come.” Then said the Jews, “Will he kill himself, since he says, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come’?”

He said to them, “You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world. I

told you that you would die in your sins, for you will die in your sins unless you believe that I am he.” They said to him, “Who are you?” Jesus said to them, “Even what I have told you from the beginning. I have much to say about you and much to judge; but he who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him.” They did not understand that he spoke to them of the Father. So Jesus said, “When you have lifted up the Son of man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority but speak thus as the Father taught me. And he who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what is pleasing to him.”

As he spoke thus, many believed in him.

Commentary

We are still in the Temple, where yesterday we witnessed the wonderful way that Jesus saved the adulterous woman. Afterwards, an intense dialogue starts up between our Lord and the Pharisees about his person and mission.

Once again, as in so many other passages, what Jesus asks for is to have faith in Him: “you will die in your sins unless you believe that I am he.” It is a crucial choice: being saved or condemned. Living eternally or dying in the blindness produced by sin.

When the Pharisees ask what Jesus means by saying “I am he,” our Lord gives them an answer that we should ponder on: “Even what I have told you from the beginning.” He is not hiding anything from them. He is what he is claiming to be, the one sent by the Father.

Sometimes we can face this situation in our prayer. We think that Jesus isn't listening to us, that he doesn't understand us, or worse, that he is hiding something from us, that he is not speaking clearly to us. Like the Pharisees, we may think that our Lord does not want to give us all the information we need, which is why we fail to fully understand a specific situation we have had to live through.

But couldn't it be the case that, as in this Gospel passage, the problem lies with those who are listening to Jesus? "You are from below, I am from above." Might it not be we who are failing to make every effort to be on the same wavelength as our Lord?

To endorse his words and validate his testimony, Jesus announces the definitive sign: the Cross. "When you have lifted up the Son of man, then you will know that I am he, and that I

do nothing on my own authority.” That is why, in this final stretch of Lent, it is worth asking ourselves if our poor ability to listen to our Lord is not a consequence of our lack of a spirit of sacrifice. As Saint Josemaría told us clearly: “the Holy Spirit is the fruit of the Cross” (*Christ is Passing By*, no. 137).

Mortification places us on the same frequency as Jesus. When we notice a certain deafness in our prayer, we can reflect on how earnestly we are seeking the Cross each day. And thus, as we see at the end of this Gospel passage, the Paraclete will make us one of the many who believed in Him.

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