

Gospel for 31 December: Call Him Father Frequently

Gospel for the seventh day of the Christmas Octave, with commentary.

Gospel (*Jn* 1:1-18)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came for testimony, to bear witness to the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness to the light.

The true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world knew him not. He came to his own home, and his own people received him not. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God; who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father. (John bore witness to him, and cried, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who

comes after me ranks before me, for he was before me.’”) And from his fulness have we all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known.

Commentary

Providentially, the Gospel for the final day of the year is taken from the prologue of John, who speaks about the new creation in Christ Jesus.

We have just celebrated our Lord’s birth, and the Church reminds us of the great newness that this event ushers in.

John insists that “no one has ever seen God.” In fact, throughout the entire Old Testament we find a constant desire to know God, to contemplate his face: “Your face, Lord, will I seek. Hide not your face from me” (cf. *Ps* 27:8-9).

The prophets closest to the God of Israel, such as Moses or Elijah, were allowed to see his glory but never his face: “I will let you see my glory and hear my holy name . . . but you cannot see my face, for no one shall see me and live” (*Ex* 33:19-20).

But now everything has changed. For “the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father,” has come into this world to “tell us” who God is, so that we can contemplate God made man. This is the life of Jesus that we read about in the Gospel: the living story of our relationship with a God who is our Father.

Contemplating during these days the Omnipotent God made a Child, and welcoming him into our lives with new generosity, reminds us that we have received the “power to become children of God.”

“Rest in divine filiation. God is a Father – your Father! – full of warmth and infinite love. Call him Father frequently and tell him, when you are alone, that you love him, that you love him very much! – and that you feel proud and strong because you are his son” (Saint Josemaría, *The Forge*, no. 331).

Giovanni Vassallo