

GOSPEL

John 1:29-34

Seeing Jesus coming towards him, John said, 'Look, there is the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. This is the one I spoke of when I said: A man is coming after me who ranks before me because he existed before me. I did not know him myself, and yet it was to reveal him to Israel that I came baptising with water.' John also declared, 'I saw the Spirit coming down on him from heaven like a dove and resting on him. I did not know him myself, but he who sent me to baptise with water had said to me, "The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and rest is the one who is going to baptise with the Holy Spirit." Yes, I have seen and I am the witness that he is the Chosen One of God.'

HOMILY OF POPE FRANCIS

19 January 2014

This passage from the Gospel is beautiful. John was baptizing; and Jesus, who had been baptized prior to this — some days before — was coming towards him and came before John. And John felt the power of the Holy Spirit within him to bear witness to Jesus. Looking at him, and looking at the people around Him, he said: "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world". And he bore witness to Jesus: this is Jesus, this is the One who has come to save us; this is the One who will give us the power of hope.

Jesus is called the Lamb: He is the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world. Someone might think: but how can a lamb, which is so weak, a weak little lamb, how can it take away so many sins, so much wickedness? With Love. With his meekness. Jesus never ceased being a lamb: meek, good, full of love, close to the little ones, close to the poor. He was there, among the people, healing everyone, teaching, praying. Jesus, so weak, like a lamb. However, he had the strength to take all our sins upon himself, all of them. "But, Father, you don't know my life: I have a sin that..., I can't even carry it with a truck...". Many times, when we examine our conscience, we find some there that are truly bad! But he carries them. He came for this: to forgive, to make peace in the

world, but first in the heart. Perhaps each one of us feels troubled in his heart, perhaps he experiences darkness in his heart, perhaps he feels a little sad over a fault.... He has come to take away all of this, He gives us peace, he forgives everything. "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away sin": he takes away sin, it's root and all! This is salvation Jesus brings about by his love and his meekness. And in listening to what John the Baptist says, who bears witness to Jesus as the Saviour, our confidence in Jesus should grow. Many times we trust a doctor: it is good, because the doctor is there to cure us; we trust in a person: brothers and sisters can help us. It is good to have this human trust among ourselves. But we forget about trust in the Lord: this is the key to success in life. Trust in the Lord, let us trust in the Lord! "Lord, look at my life: I'm in the dark, I have this struggle, I have this sin..."; everything we have: "Look at this: I trust in you!"; And this is a risk we must take: to trust in Him, and He never disappoints. Never, never! Listen carefully, young people, who are just beginning life now: Jesus never disappoints. Never. This is the testimony of John: Jesus, the good One, the meek One, will end as a lamb, who is slain. Without crying out. He came to save us, to take away sin. Mine, yours and that of the whole world: all of it, all of it.

And now I invite you to do something: let us close our eyes, let us imagine the scene on the banks of the river, John as he is baptizing and Jesus who is approaching. And let us listen to John's voice: "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world". Let us watch Jesus and in silence, each one of us, say something to Jesus from his heart. In silence. (*Pause for silence*).

May the Lord Jesus, who is meek, who is good — he is a lamb — who came to take away sin, accompany us on the path of our life. So be it.

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REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What stood out to you from the Gospel or Reflection/ Homily?



Head: In what way has Pope Francis' homily aided your understanding of Jesus as the Lamb of God?



Heart: How has God brought peace to your heart through the power of mercy?



Hands: In what ways can you grow in your trust of the Lord, surrendering your life to Him?

PRAYER

Spend some time in prayer with one another:

1. Conscious of what has just been shared, members briefly name/ describe their prayer needs.
2. Intentionally call on the Holy Spirit to be present (e.g. "Come Holy Spirit, please be present as we pray")
3. Offer prayers of thanks and praise to God.
4. Pray for each others' prayer needs. Where appropriate, you may like to encourage the group to place a hand on the shoulder of the individual that you are currently praying for.
5. Conclude your prayer time with another prayer of praise, perhaps praying the 'Glory Be'.