

SUNDAY WITHIN THE CHRISTMAS OCTAVE

ST. JOHN

(Jn 21: 19-24) (No audio)

(Poem Vol. 5, pp. 828-9 – Gospel Vol. 10, p. 395;

Notebooks 1944, p. 81)

(Jesus speaks to Peter:) 'Feed My sheep. Your treble profession of love has cancelled your treble denial. You are completely pure, Simon of Jonah, and I say to you: put on the pontificals and take the Holiness of the Lord among My flock. Fasten your clothes at your waist and keep them fastened, until from Shepherd you also become lamb. I solemnly tell you that when you were young, you put on your own belt and you went where you liked, but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and somebody else will put a belt round you and will take you where you would rather not go. But now it is I Who say to you: "Gird yourself and follow Me on My own way". Stand up and come.'

Jesus stands up and Peter stands up going towards the shore, and the others begin to put out the fire smothering it under the sand.

But John, after picking up the remains of the bread, follows Jesus. Peter hears the shuffling of steps and turns round. He sees John, and pointing him out to Jesus, he asks: 'And what will happen to him?'

'If I want him to stay until I come back, what does it matter to you? You are to follow Me.'

They are on the shore. Peter would like to go on speaking, but Jesus' majesty and the words he has heard detain him. He kneels down, imitated by the others and adores. Jesus blesses them and dismisses them. They get on the boat and go away rowing. Jesus looks at them go.

(St. John speaks to Maria:) 'Yesterday morning, you complained a bit to our Good Jesus. It seemed to you that He was placing you after the last person who set to Work, the victim immolated at once, while you, that have been on the altar for years and were the first to pronounce the prayer given by the Master, never see your sacrifice being consummated.

You are my sister, Maria. I was the first disciple of Jesus. I was the one who was more like Him than all the others. I made His words, His affections, and His desires my own. I had the same longing as He did to die in order to redeem. And I saw the others go to God before me. Even Paul, the apostle who was a latecomer, preceded me. And Stephen was the first to fall - the one who came after the Master. And I remained.

I experienced the pain of separation from the Master, the longing of expectation, persecutions, martyrdom, and exile. But not the swift consummation of the sacrifice. I, who was hungry for my Jesus, had to watch the years go by until the most advanced old age before being able to reach Him.

And what of it? Was my martyrdom of love and desire less of a martyrdom than that of the others? Or less fruitful? No, little sister. There are some who are received immediately and others who "*must* remain as long as He wants them to remain," for their task is to be God's voice for their brothers and sisters.

But, sister in Christ's love, believe that your wait is Jesus' predilection. He leaves you because you are his little John, and you must preach love to your brothers and sisters with the words the Master gives you. It is the sweetest mission.

"Peace be with you always.'