

Christ the Way:
Reflections on John 14, St Augustine, and Synodality
Bishop Daniel Flores, Brownsville TX
March 19, 2024

Tractate 34, 8-10
On John 8,12:
*Whoever follows me will have the Light of Life*¹

8. For then, my brothers, the Lord briefly states: "*I am the light of the world; Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life,*"

By these words it is one thing he commands,

and it is another thing he promises:

let us do what he commands;

so we will not shamefacedly desire what he promises;

such that he say to us at his judgment: "Indeed, have you done what I commanded, such that you might ask for what I promised?"

What then did you command, Lord our God?

He says to you: that you *follow me*.

You have asked for the counsel of life. Which life, if not that of which it is said: *In you is the fount of life* (Ps 36,9)?

A certain man heard this:

Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me (Mt 19, 16-22).

He went away sad, he did not follow him.

He sought the good Teacher, addressed him as doctor and yet despised what he taught;

He left sad, chained by his greed; He left sad, because he had a great burden of greed on his shoulders.

He became weary, he became distraught;

and, regarding the one who wanted to unload the burden from him, he thought that he should not follow him,

but rather desert him.

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In another place, the Lord cried out in the gospel:
*Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest;
Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and lowly in
heart (Mt 11, 28-29).*

How many, hearing the gospel, did what the rich man did not do when
they heard this from the Masters mouth?

Let's do this then, right now; let us follow the Lord, let us break the
shackles that prevent us from following him.

And who is qualified to loosen such bonds, if not not the one to whom it is
said: *You broke my chains (Ps 115,16)?*

About whom another Psalm says:

*the Lord releases those who are chained, he lifts up those who are crushed (Ps
145,8).*

9. And those who are released and upright, what do they follow if not the
light from whom they hear,
I am the light of the world, the one who follows me will not walk in darkness?

**For the Lord illuminates the blind,
We are, therefore, enlightened now, brothers, for we have the eye salve
of faith, since his saliva was earlier mixed with earth to anoint the one
who was born blind (Jn 9,6).**

We too were born blind from Adam and we need him to enlighten us.

He mixed saliva with earth:

The word became flesh and dwelt among us (Jn 1,14).

He mixed saliva with earth; therefore it was predicted:

The truth has sprung from the earth (Ps 84,12).

For his part, he himself said:

I am the Way and the Truth and the Life (Jn 14,6).

We will enjoy the truth when we see him face to face,
because this too is promised to us.

In fact, who would dare to expect what God has not deigned to promise or give?

We will see face to face.

The Apostle says: *Now I know in part, now darkly as through a mirror; then face to face* (1 Cor 13,12).

And the apostle John in his letter:

Dearly beloved, now we are children of God and it has not yet appeared what we will be; We know that, when he has appeared, we will be like to him because we will see him as he is (1 Jn 3,2).

This is a great promise. If you love him, follow him.

"I love him", you say, but where do I follow him?"

If the Lord your God had said to you:

"I am the truth and the life,"

you, desirous of the truth, longing for life, would seek the way by which you could reach these things, and you would say to yourself:

"A Great thing is the Truth, A great thing is Life!

If only my soul could get there!

Where are you looking?

First hear him say: I am the Way.

First he is telling you how you might arrive,
then to where you can arrive.

I am the Way, he affirms. The way to where?

The Truth and the Life.

He first said where you can come,

I am the Way, I am the Truth, I am the Life.

Because he remains in the Father he is the Truth and the Life;

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Because he put on the flesh, he became the Way.

You are not told: "labor looking for the way, that you might reach the truth
and life";

You are not told this.

Lazy man, get up! **The Way in person has come to you and, he has
awakened you who were sleeping.**

If he has this awakened you. Get up and walk!

Maybe you try to walk and you can't because your feet hurt.

Why do your feet hurt?

Have they not run through hardships, moved by greed?

But the Word of God also healed the lame.

You affirm: "Behold, my feet are healthy, but I do not see the path itself."

He also enlightened the blind.

10. All of this happens through faith,
while we are exiled from the Lord, remaining in the body.
But, when we have finished the way and arrive at the homeland itself,
what will we be more joyful,
what will we be more blessed?

**Because nothing will be more peaceful,
since nothing will rebel against us.**

But now, brothers, we are hardly without quarrels.

To concord, yes, we have been called,

**we are commanded to have peace among ourselves;
To this we must strive and commit with all our strength,**

to one day reach the most perfect peace;

At the moment, however, we almost always quarrel with those we want to look after.

One errs: you want to lead him to the way;
he resists you: you quarrel;
a pagan resists: and you dispute against the errors of idols and demons;
a heretic resists: and you dispute against other demonic doctrines;
a bad Catholic refuses to live well:
you also correct your more intimate brother;
He remains with you in the household, yet seeks paths of perdition:
you are agitated about how to correct him, to give a good account of him
before the Lord for the both of you.

How many fights are needed everywhere!

**Almost always, man, exhausted by weariness, says to himself:
“Why do I have to put up with contradictors, put up with those who
return evil for good?”
I want to look after them, they want to perish.**

I spend my life quarreling, I have no peace.

**Furthermore, I make enemies of those I should consider friends, if they
observed the benevolence of those who look out for them.**

Why do I have to put up with that?
I will return to myself, I will be with me; I will call on my God.
Return to yourself: there you will find a quarrel.
If you started following God, there you find a quarrel.
“What quarrel,” you ask, “do I find?”
*The flesh desires against the spirit
and the spirit against the flesh (Gal 5,17).*
Behold yourself are it, behold you alone are the quarrel;

behold you suffer no other one (besides yourself);
*but you see in your members another law, which is opposed to the law of your
mind and which captivates you through the law of sin and death, which is in your
members.*

**Shout, then, and cry out to God from your inner quarrel,
so that for you he can make peace in you:**
*I am an unhappy man! Who will free me from this body of death? The
grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom 7,23-25).*
**For whoever follows me, he says, will not walk in darkness but will have
the light of life.**

Once every quarrel is completely over, immortality will follow, because
death, the last enemy, will be destroyed (1 Cor 15,26).
And what kind of peace will there be?
*It is necessary that this corruptible put on incorruption, and that this mortal put
on immortality (1 Cor 15,53).*
To get to this, because then it will be present to us,
let us now follow in hope he who said:
*I am the light of the world; Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will
have the light of life.*
Amen.