

## *Homily on 1 John 3: 13-18*

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Dear brothers and sisters, the reading from the letter of the blessed Apostle John brings to us a twofold message: **regarding the fate of the Christians in this world;** and the other is **something concerning our the personal reply to God's gift of love.**

Let us reflect about the reality of everything that is happening in our days and try to see in everything the providential hand of God. In each person's case, based of his experience of life, those reflections will be certainly different. We all know that some of the promises of God have not been fulfilled yet. In fact, our daily choices and our personal answer to God's call are still lying before us... still have to be fulfilled.

First, let's consider the fate of the Christians in this world. Apostle John writes to us regarding the hatred the world has towards all those who are striving to love God, are striving to sacrifice their own interests for the good of others in love that *reaches to the end*. In one his addresses Pope Benedict XVI wrote: *"Once more we have to say: How far we are from the world in which people no longer need to be taught about God because he is present within us! It has been asserted that our century is characterized by an entirely new phenomenon: the appearance of the people incapable of relating to God. Whether that be true or not, we have to admit that our distance from God – the obscurity and the dubiousness surrounding him today – is greater than ever before; Indeed, that even we who are trying to be believers often feel as if the reality of God is been withdrawn from between our hands. Do we not ourselves often begin to ask where he is amid all the silence of this world? Do we not ourselves often have a feeling that, at the end of all our thinking, we have only words in our grasp, while the reality of God is far greater than ever before? In our own lives, too, we inevitably experience time when the Cristian reality is powerless against all that influence us and make demands on us"*<sup>1</sup>. And in this insight of the Pope can be understood the destiny of the Christians who strive daily to follow Christ leaving His own destiny. Certainly, all those who wish to follow Christ daily bear on themselves a mark of those who became the *last of all*. Yet is

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph Ratzinger: 'What it means to be a Christian'.

fulfilling in them day after day the words of St. Paul concerning those who do not wish to be conformed to this world but are transformed by renewing of their minds. They know that God is faithful and that He will not let them be tempted beyond what they can bear. The Scriptures certainly will be fulfilled in our personal life and in the life of this world; and it is always an encouraging thing that behind of every even radically incomprehensible situation is standing God and His will is always good for us. Because *“If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also, along with Him, freely give us all things?”* (Rom 8:31). We just have to ask Him, ask Him in faith.

And with these words we pass to the second moment in this homily concerning our personal answer to the gift of God’s love. St. John Apostle says: *“By this we know what love is: Jesus laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If anyone with earthly possessions sees his brother in need, but withholds his compassion from him, how can the love of God abide in him?...”* (1 John 3:16). I started this homily by saying let’s try to see in everything that’s happening in our days the providential hand of God. God who loves us and will never abandon us. As through the colors we can know the reality of the existing world, thus through our love for neighbor can we grasp the depth of our own faith. Because it is through the visible reality that we pass to the contemplation of the something invisible and not vice versa. Through our works we can understand how deep our faith is. That is why the Apostle says: *“Little children, let us love not in word and speech, but in action and truth. And by this we will know that we belong to the truth...”* (1 John 3:18-19). Let the present difficulty we are passing through and the apparent silence of God never allow our hearts to be hardened. Let own personal commitment to the deeper life of prayer and the fruitful participation in the sacraments help us to see in those in need the face of God, the God who is still passing His way of the Cross to the Calvary. As the Scriptures were fulfilled in the life of our Lord, thus they have to be fulfilled in our lives, too. They are unfulfilled promises yet... they can be fulfilled only when we open up our hearts to the Gospel.

May our Lady, Help of the Christian, obtain for us the grace to always continue to strive for holiness through the attentive listening of the Gospel, showing to this world wounded by sin the face of God.