

Homily for 2nd Sunday of Ordinary Time, Year B

1/17/21

Fr. Valentin Iurochkin

Didn't John already profess Jesus as the Lamb of God? Yet, in today's Gospel John again professes Jesus as the Lamb of God.... Why? If John the Baptist has already professed Jesus as the Lamb of God why does the follower of John the Baptist bring to our attention this important detail?

We remember that as soon as Our Lady – the Mother of God – knows that Elizabeth was with child, she comes straight to minister to her needs. *“The example of Mary – says Origen – going to see her neighbor, and the Son of God going to visit the Baptist, should teach us modesty and fervent charity towards to our neighbors”*.

Mary and Jesus are going to serve their neighbor St. Elizabeth and John Baptist. As soon as Elizabeth saw Mary, she declared her to be *“highly blessed among women”*. In Mary's visitation Elizabeth recognized Mary's modesty, humility, and fervent charity towards her. Yet, as we well remember, Mary didn't come alone – Jesus came together with her... and as Mary was highly praised by Elizabeth, so John Baptist – still unable to confess Christ with his lips – was in Christ's debt. He was still called to declare that he himself was only the voice crying in the wilderness; he was called to become the voice that vanishes; the voice called to entrust the whole of his mission to Christ from whom he received it.

The Gospel of Mathew considers directly Christ's coming to his Baptism. Yet, John Apostle – one of the closest followers of John Baptist

– brings in his Gospel to our attention a very important detail. He says Christ coming to John a second time following His baptism. John Evangelist writes: *“The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, ‘Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is the one I meant when I said, ‘A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’ ’ ”*

So we may ask: “Why did Jesus come to the Baptist the following day after his baptism?” Why?

The answer is very simple: because John Baptist was still standing in Christ’s debt. By coming to John the following day, Christ gives an opportunity of speaking of Him. As Mary was exalted by Elizabeth, so Christ was meant to be exalted by John at the end of his mission. “He came too the next day, that those who heard the former testimony of John, might hear it again more plainly”.

As we’ve told in the beginning of this homily, “the example of Mary going to see her inferior, and the Son of God going to visit the Baptist, should teach us modesty and fervent charity to our inferiors”. So we ask through the intercession of Our Lady for the grace to serve humbly our inferiors; we ask to remember that as Mary and Jesus came to serve in humility we may by following their example as well, serve our neighbor in modesty and fervent charity. Remember: as we serve Christ in our neighbor, we will one day be served by Him in heaven.