

(Transcription)

Rome, April 25, 2001¹

Word of Life

“Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him” (John 14:23).

Jesus is giving his powerful farewell address to his apostles, and he has just assured them, among other things, that they will see him again because he will reveal himself to those who love him.

Then Jude asks him why he intends to reveal himself only to them and not to everyone. The disciple was hoping for a great public manifestation of Jesus, one that would change the course of history and that would be, in his opinion, more effective for the salvation of the world. In fact, the apostles thought of Jesus as the long-awaited prophet of the last days who would reveal himself to everyone as the King of Israel. Putting himself at the head of the people of God, he would establish at once and for all time the Kingdom of the Lord.

Instead, Jesus explains that he will not reveal himself in an external and spectacular way. His will be a simple but extraordinary “coming” of the Trinity into the hearts of the faithful, wherever there is faith and love.

With this answer, Jesus indicates how he will remain in the midst of his own followers after his death, and he explains how it will be possible to establish a relationship with him.

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Jesus can be present in Christians and in the midst of the community even now. There is no need to wait for the future. The temple that welcomes him is not made of bricks and mortar; rather, it is the very heart of the Christian that becomes the new tabernacle, the living dwelling place of the Trinity.

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But how can Christians achieve this? How can they have God come and dwell in their hearts? How can they enter into this profound communion with him?

Through love for Jesus, a love that is not mere sentimentalism, but a love that will keep his word, a love that will show itself in everyday living.

It is to this love on the part of a Christian, verified by actions, that God responds with his own love: the Trinity comes to dwell in the person’s heart.

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“Keep my word.” What are the words that the Christian is called to keep?

In John’s Gospel, “my word” is often synonymous with “my commandment.” The Christian, therefore, is called to keep Jesus’ commandments. But these should not be viewed as a list of laws. They should be understood as being summed up in what Jesus illustrated by washing his disciples’ feet: the commandment of mutual love. God commands all Christians to love one another to the point of giving of themselves completely, as Jesus taught and did.

¹ Written in april 2001

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How can we live this Word of Life well? How can we reach the point in which the Father himself will love us and the Trinity will come to dwell within us? By loving one another with all our hearts, with decisiveness and perseverance.

It is principally through loving in this way that we Christians can begin to live that deep-reaching Christian asceticism that the crucified Jesus asks of us. For the practice of mutual love causes the other virtues to blossom in our hearts, and this love is also the surest measure of Christian holiness.

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