

# **NO ONE COMES TO THE FATHER EXCEPT THROUGH JESUS CHRIST**

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Homily of Thursday, 4<sup>th</sup> Week of Easter, May 19, 2011  
Acts 13:13-25, Ps. 88, John 13:16-20

“Let it be known to you therefore, brethren, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and by him every one that believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses” (Acts 13:38-39).

This is from St. Paul’s sermon in Antioch of Pisidia. As always, he preaches Jesus as the Messiah and Savior who was crucified and whom God raised from the dead. In him, one can be justified. Those who did not succeed in justifying themselves according to the law of Moses, now through faith in Christ can be justified, for it is the merits of Christ, and not their own, that now justify them when they accept him in faith. This salvation is, moreover, now not just for the Jews, but for the gentiles too—for everyone who will believe in Christ and trust in him in a personal way for his salvation and justification.

We can only know and come to the Father through Jesus Christ. He is the only way to the Father. Jesus himself said, “I am the way and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me” (John 14:6), and “No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him” (Matt. 11:27).

While it is true that we can also know something of God by observing nature (Rom. 1:18-22), nevertheless without the revelation of the Old Testament and of Jesus Christ, it is difficult to know him well in this way, as history has shown. And even for us who believe in Christ, nature does not help us that much beyond a certain elementary point, and in fact beyond that point, it is more of a hindrance than a help in knowing the Father and uniting ourselves to him, for the love of creatures, pleasure, and people divides our heart. In order to know God and unite ourselves to him, we have to renounce other human loves and the delights and pleasures of the world so that we can love him with all our heart, with an undivided heart. That is why monks are celibate, live within monastic enclosures, fast, eat very simply, and renounce movies, television, and radio. They want to preserve their mind and heart in a state of purity, reserving themselves for the Lord alone. They know that Jesus Christ is the only way that will lead them to the Father, and that this will be through faith, not through the eyes and ears of

the body. They therefore guard their five senses from the delights of the world, so as not to be distracted by the things that are seen in their journey to the things that are unseen.

Jesus Christ is the definitive means established by God for man to know and be united to the Father. It is the death of Christ on the cross that saves us from our greatest enemy, sin and the burden and pain of guilt, which depresses our spirit. It is by his merits, not ours, that we are saved from this and made righteous—justified—in his sight.

This is the means of salvation that we preach to the nations, so that every person may be saved with his sins forgiven, enter into a union of love with the Father, and receive the Holy Spirit, who rejoices the heart. This is the only way to be happy. We will continue falling into imperfections and sinning—hopefully in ever smaller things—but each time this happens, we should again take refuge in Christ with faith to be justified and receive the forgiveness of our sins. Thus in Christ we are most of the time happy with the true happiness of the Holy Spirit in our heart.