

I AM THE WAY, AND THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE -Biblical Commentary by
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John 14,1-12

“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way to where I am going.” Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.

“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.

Jesus' announcement of Peter's betrayal throws despair in the community of disciples, and it is only the anticipation of that storm that will break forth in his group. Then Jesus seeks to encourage his group; this is how chapter 14 of John's gospel begins.

Jesus says, *“Let not your hearts be troubled.”* precisely because there was this announcement *“Believe in God; believe also in me.”* Why does Jesus unite faith in God and faith in himself? Because Jesus will be captured, tortured and murdered in the name of God, as a blasphemer, as an enemy of God, and Jesus instead affirms that, between him and God, there is full harmony

Then Jesus gives a truly important and precious indication, one of those indications that, if understood, really changes the relationship with the Father: *“In my Father's house are many rooms.”* What does Jesus mean with this fact that there are many rooms? The immensity of God does not manifest itself in one person or in one community, but he needs multiple forms to flourish through new and original forms of love, forgiveness, mercy. It is not a dwelling with the Father, Jesus does not go to prepare apartments, but children of God, but the Father who comes to dwell among men. In fact, later in verse 23 of the same chapter, Jesus says *“If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.”* So each individual or community is called to be the only true sanctuary, where the love and mercy of the Father, dwells.

And Jesus continues, *“If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?”* This indicates the sanctuary, therefore each person becomes this visible sanctuary, *“.. I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.”* Jesus is in the fullness of the divine dimension, a fullness that is not his exclusive privilege, but a possibility for all believers. *“And you know the way to where I am going.”* What is the way? It is what Jesus indicated: love making for service.

And here, at this point, there is the reply of three disciples, here in the liturgical version we have only the first two, the number three indicates the totality, therefore a misunderstanding on the part of the group. The first is Thomas, who asks him: *“Lord, we do not know where you are*

going. *How can we know the way?*” And here Jesus replies with this important, solemn affirmation: *“I am..”* with this he claims the fullness of the divine condition, *“..the way, and the truth, and the life.”* Jesus is the way because he is the truth; Jesus does not say he has the truth, and he does not ask the disciples to have the truth, but to be the truth. What is truth in this gospel? The truth in this gospel is a divine dynamism, which is not expressed through formulas, through doctrine, but only through works and the capacity to love. This path, which leads to this dynamism of love, leads to life, and here the evangelist uses the term that indicates indestructible life.

“No one comes to the Father except through me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.” when have the disciples known and seen the Father? In the previous episode, which was that of the washing of the feet Jesus, who is God, put himself at the service of his own, indicating and showing who God is. Who is God? generous love, who puts himself at the service of his people.

And here is the second disciple: *“Philip said to him, ‘Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip?’”* and here is another important statement: *“Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”* In the prologue to this gospel, the evangelist had written that nobody had ever seen God, only his son was the revelation. What does this mean? That Jesus is not equal to God, but God is equal to Jesus. So the evangelist invites you to suspend everything we know about God, and check and control it, with what he presents in Jesus. If it coincides, keep it, if it is different, or worse, eliminated it. So in Jesus there is the only possibility to know who God is, and who is this God? We have seen it: God is love making himself service.

“Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?” and here is another important statement *“The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works.”* in the words of Jesus the works of the Father and the creative power of the Creator are manifested. This means that every single word of Jesus’ contains energy in it of the same creative action of God and what he said came true.

“Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.” Jesus does not ask to believe in him for a doctrine, or theology, but for works, the works that communicate life, because the doctrine is questionable, actions that communicate life, can be seen and accounted for. Works in favor of man are the only criterion of credibility for Jesus and his disciples

And at the end a statement that surprises *“Truly, truly, I say to you,...”* this repetition means that what I say now is true, *“..whoever believes in me..”* meaning who welcomes me *“.. will also do the works that I do..”* so these actions that communicate life, everyone can do them, but Jesus adds *“.. and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.”* Jesus warns his disciples that his death will not be an absence, but an even more intense presence. The fact that Jesus is not physically present will not be seen as a loss, but as a gain, and will allow the disciples and the community, to perform the same actions as Jesus, with the same power.