

Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

Coming to Believe Fourth Week of Lent Saturday, April 5, 2014 8:15 AM
Jer 11:18-29; **Jn 7:40-53** (St. Vincent Ferrer, priest) (The point John is always making is that is what is appropriate: to explore, to question.)

Since the very beginning of the Church people have noted that the Gospel of John is different from the other three. The other three are called Synoptics because they synopsise the life of Jesus. John is different because he is giving a different perspective.

It is typical of modern scholars, almost all of them, to regard the three Synoptics as somehow more historical or more correct or more objective. I personally am not so sure about that, because **what is the mission of Jesus anyway but to reveal the heart of the Father?** And that's not a matter of being outwardly observant of what happened, but it's rather a matter of being in touch with the inner life of Jesus. **That seems to be what John is all about, the inner life of Jesus.**

Here the whole topic is how **Jesus causes divisions**. Who is he? Is he from God or not? That is the question from John's viewpoint. It's very clear that Jesus teaches differently from the Pharisees, no doubt about that. No one has ever disputed that. The question is: **Who speaks for God? And it comes down to either you believe in the tradition as it has been handed down or you take the view of Jesus**, but you can't have both. So the crowd is divided and the point they ask is: Where is he from? That's rather pointless, but that's in the text. But then in the Sanhedrin there is also division. Nicodemus, a member of the Sanhedrin—not so sure Jesus is not from God, wants to explore, wants to question.

The point John is always making is that is what is appropriate: to explore, to question. Even **Jesus' own disciples** don't believe all the time; they come to believe. **They are always coming to believe.** They began to believe at Cana; then gradually they start to see more and more and more. But on the night of the Last Supper, they are still in the dark,

for the most part. At the time of the resurrection, only the beloved disciple sees and believes, figures it out, if you want, realizes something really has happened that's important. The rest are just wondering who stole the body.

So this process of coming to believe, that's what we have to focus on. The crowd is divided. The Sanhedrin is divided. The individual believer is divided. All the evidence is not on one side. **This becomes a very personal commitment to believe in Jesus as the one sent by the Father.**