

## **Commentary on the Gospel for Fri, Mar 15th 2024**

### **The Word of God cannot remain silent**

All of us experience times when we struggle to explain something, and no matter how hard we try, others fail to get the point we are trying to make. I often struggle with my accent and wrong pronunciations to make my point clear to my parishioners or the Community! And, of course, I thought that the problem was theirs! How do they not understand what is so clear to me!

As we approach the closing weeks of Lent, we hear today from St. John the evangelist who makes a great reflection on the journeys that Jesus made to Judea and reveals incidents that the other evangelists do not.

John notices that Jesus is confining his activities to Galilee. He did not want to go to Judea and the vicinity of Jerusalem because people there wanted to kill him. Jesus does not expose himself unnecessarily to danger and waits for “his time.”

It is the time of the Feast of Tabernacles, but today’s reading does not mention about the feast. We reflected on this passage in detail last Sunday. The feast of Tabernacles was one of the three major feasts of the Jews. Many Jews came from all over the land of Israel and from other countries on pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the feast.

The family members of Jesus are urging him to go up to Jerusalem and show himself to the world instead of confining himself to the village. Jesus declined, but after they had left, he, probably accompanied by the apostles, secretly went up to the feast. The secrecy is easy to understand in light of the threats against Jesus. But what happens next is not so easy to understand. How do we explain first the secrecy and then the lack of it?

Jesus is a source of confusion in the minds of many people. On the one hand, the people are aware that Jesus has become a target of their religious leaders, yet he goes about openly speaking freely and without fear. The Word of God cannot remain silent.

Jesus then tells them: “Yes, you know me, and you know where I come from.” That is only partially true; rather, they think they know.

Do we really know who Jesus is? There are many conflicting opinions out there. But to know the real Jesus, we must go back to the Scriptures, read them, pray with them and strive to live by the Word of God. Lent invites us to spend time with the Word of God, and to make it a practice that goes far beyond Lent.