

Homily for 2nd Sunday ordinary time Year 1, 18-01.26

“Behold, the Lamb of God.”

Today’s Gospel places us beside John the Baptist as he points away from himself and toward Jesus. He does not offer a long explanation or a complex theology. He simply says, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.” In that single sentence, John reveals who Jesus is and what He has come to do.

First, Jesus is the Lamb of God. For the people of Israel, the image of the lamb was deeply familiar. The lamb of the Passover was sacrificed so that the people might be freed from slavery. By calling Jesus the Lamb of God, John proclaims that Jesus is the true and final sacrifice—not offered again and again, but once and for all. He does not merely cover sin; He takes it away. Our guilt, our brokenness, our failures—Jesus carries them upon Himself.

Second, John says that Jesus takes away the sin of the world. Not just the sins of a few, not only the sins of the righteous, but the sin of the whole world. This tells us something profound about God’s heart: God’s saving love is universal. No one is excluded. No sin is too great. No life is beyond redemption.

John also speaks of the Spirit descending like a dove and remaining on Jesus. This is important. In the Old Testament, the Spirit often came and went. But on Jesus, the Spirit remains. This tells us that Jesus is the one fully anointed by God, the One who acts always in perfect unity with the Father. When we encounter Jesus, we encounter God Himself at work in our world.

Finally, John’s role is clear: he is a witness. “I have seen and testified,” he says. John teaches us what it means to be a disciple. A disciple does not draw attention to himself. A disciple points to Christ. John steps back so that Jesus may be revealed.

This Gospel challenges us with a simple but powerful question: Whom are we pointing to with our lives? Do our words, choices, and attitudes lead others to Jesus, the Lamb of God? Or do they draw attention only to ourselves?

As we continue this Eucharist, we will hear the same words John spoke: “Behold the Lamb of God.” Let us not hear them as routine. Let us hear them with faith. And let us respond not only with our lips, but with our lives—by following the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world.