

The Gospel today is filled with a strange tension.

The apostles finally say to Jesus:

“Now we know that you know all things.”

At last, they seem confident.

At last, they seem certain.

And yet Christ answers almost painfully:

“Do you now believe?”

Then He says:

“The hour is coming when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave me alone.”

In other words:

You think you are strong now.

But your faith is still weaker than you realise.

That is a hard truth.

And it remains true for every Christian soul.

We often think faith is strongest precisely before it is tested.

It is easy to speak bravely before suffering arrives.

Easy to promise fidelity before sacrifice costs something.

But Christ sees deeper than human confidence.

He knows the apostles will flee.

Peter will deny Him.

The others will scatter into the darkness.

And yet Christ speaks without bitterness.

Because He already knows something they do not yet understand:

Grace will rebuild what fear destroys.

Then comes one of the greatest lines in all the Gospel:

“In the world you will have trouble. But take courage; I have conquered the world.”

Not:

“You might suffer.”

You will.

The Catholic Faith has never hidden this.

To belong to Christ is to enter conflict with the spirit of the world.

Not because the Church seeks conflict—

but because truth exposes darkness.

Holiness unsettles sin.

The Cross contradicts pride.

And yet Christ says: Take courage.

Why?

Because the victory has already been won.

Not visibly yet.

Not fully manifested.

But won.

The Resurrection has changed history forever.

And then the first reading shows that victory spreading through the Church.

Paul arrives at Ephesus and finds disciples who know something of repentance, but not yet the fullness of the Faith.

They have received John’s baptism.

But they have not yet received the Holy Spirit.

And so Paul baptises them in the name of Jesus.

Then he lays hands upon them.

And the Holy Spirit descends.

Again we see something profoundly Catholic:

The Faith is not merely human conviction.

Grace is communicated sacramentally.

The Holy Spirit is truly given.

Lives are changed.

Souls are strengthened.

And today, on the memorial of Pope Saint John I, these readings become even more striking.

John I was pope during a time of political pressure and persecution.

He was sent on a dangerous mission by an earthly ruler who wanted to control the Church.

And eventually he died imprisoned because he remained faithful.

He knew exactly what Christ meant:

“In the world you will have trouble.”

But he also believed the second half:

“I have conquered the world.”

That is what gave the martyrs courage.

Not optimism.

Not worldly power.

Certainty that Christ reigns beyond death itself.

And perhaps that is the deepest challenge in today’s Gospel.

Do we actually believe Christ has conquered the world?

Because many Catholics live as though darkness has the final word.

Fear dominates.

Discouragement dominates.

The culture grows hostile and souls become silent.

But Christ does not tell His Church to panic.

He tells her to take courage.

Not because evil is unreal.

But because evil is temporary.

Christ reigns eternally.

And that changes how suffering itself is understood.

The apostles will scatter—

but they will become saints.

Peter will deny Christ—

but later die crucified for Him.

Weakness is not the final chapter when grace enters the soul.

That matters enormously.

Because there are people who feel ashamed of their weakness.

Ashamed of repeated struggle.

Ashamed of fear.

Ashamed of failure.

And today Christ speaks directly into that:

The apostles themselves failed.

But grace rebuilt them.

And that rebuilding happens concretely in the sacramental life of the Church.

In Baptism, the soul receives divine life.

In Confirmation, the Holy Spirit strengthens the Christian for witness.

In Confession, the fallen are raised again.

The Church is not a society of the already perfect.

She is the place where grace restores sinners.

And so the Gospel today ends not in fear but in victory.

Yes, there will be suffering.

Yes, there will be scattering.

Yes, the world will oppose the truth.

But Christ has conquered.

Not Caesar.

Not the spirit of the age.

Not death.

Christ.

And those who remain in Him share already in that victory.

Even now.

Even through weakness.

Even through suffering.

Because the risen Lord has already overcome the world.