

Fr. Romeo Evangelista Homily
Weekday Mass - Thursday, May 7, 2020
Cycle A

The verb “to be” is among the most widely used verbs in almost all languages, perhaps among the earliest that we learned. I am, you are, he/she/it is, we are, they are. With it we can predicate a multitude of nouns or adjectives to the subject: I am a warrior; I am a Christian. “To be” qualifies the essence or the condition of the subject. In the Gospel of John, Jesus uses the verb in describing himself: “I Am.....the bread of life; the light of the world; the gate; the good shepherd; the resurrection and the life, the way, the truth and the life; the vine.”

However, it is more difficult to explain “to be” in its absolute form. The sense is one of existing. We remember the Shakespearean monologue in Hamlet where the protagonist verbalizes his dilemma: “To be or not to be” – a troubled, depressed youth contemplating whether he should continue existing or not.

Jesus uses the verb “to be” in its absolute form several times. Our Gospel for today is one of these instances: “So that when it happens you may believe that I AM”. When we see “I AM”, we are reminded of the conversation between the Lord and Moses where the Lord refers to himself as “I Am who I Am”. The name of God tells us who He is: that He exists, that He persists.

By using “I Am”, Jesus reveals to His disciples His close affinity to the Father who sent Him and also His divinity. Like the Father, Jesus is. He exists – not only for the disciples who were with Him at the Last Supper, but also for all of us. He is continually present in our lives.

If all of us believed in the presence of Jesus in our lives, then like Him we could all make this world a better place to live in.

Amen