**DECEMBER 2016**

## FIRST DECADE OF DECEMBER

### The one who does the will of my Father in heaven

### Is 26,1-6; Ps 117,1.8-9.19-21.25-27; Mt 7,21.24-27

**1 DECEMBER**

The Old Covenant is on the Word, on the Commandments. Everything else lives for the obedience to the commandments, never in substitution to them. Whatever replaces the Commandments is not only useless, but also sinful, because the result of a foolish and wicked mind. Our religion is most pure obedience to the Law.

*"Now, Israel, hear the statutes and decrees which I am teaching you to observe, that you may live, and may enter in and take possession of the land which the Lord, the God of your fathers, is giving you. In your observance of the commandments of the Lord, your God, which I enjoin upon you, you shall not add to what I command you nor subtract from it. You have seen with your own eyes what the Lord did at Baal-peor: the Lord, your God, destroyed from your midst everyone that followed the Baal of Peor; but you, who clung to the Lord, your God, are all alive today. Therefore, I teach you the statutes and decrees as the Lord, my God, has commanded me, that you may observe them in the land you are entering to occupy. Observe them carefully, for thus will you give evidence of your wisdom and intelligence to the nations, who will hear of all these statutes and say, 'This great nation is truly a wise and intelligent people.' For what great nation is there that has gods so close to it as the Lord, our God, is to us whenever we call upon him? Or what great nation has statutes and decrees that are as just as this whole law which I am setting before you today?*

*"However, take care and be earnestly on your guard not to forget the things which your own eyes have seen, nor let them slip from your memory as long as you live, but teach them to your children and to your children's children. There was the day on which you stood before the Lord, your God, at Horeb, and he said to me, 'Assemble the people for me; I will have them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me as long as they live in the land and may so teach their children.' You came near and stood at the foot of the mountain, which blazed to the very sky with fire and was enveloped in a dense black cloud. Then the Lord spoke to you from the midst of the fire. You heard the sound of the words, but saw no form; there was only a voice. He proclaimed to you his covenant, which he commanded you to keep: the ten commandments, which he wrote on two tablets of stone. The Lord charged me at that time to teach you the statutes and decrees which you are to observe over in the land you will occupy (Dt 4,1-14).*

Jesus arrives and the New Covenant is born in his blood. The logic is one and immutable. It is aimed to the observance of the Word, which is the one of Christ the Lord. This Word does not cancel, does not abolish that of his Father. It is the perfect fulfilment of that one. To the Word of God, Jesus gives perfect, immutable, completed eternal form and substance. Everything else is designed to obedience to the Word. Replacing the word with other things makes religion vain and sinful, because it is a true replacement of its divine statute. But the man works all to replace the Word with things that not even can be used as an aid to obey the Word with a perfect hearing.

*"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. "Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and buffeted the house. But it did not collapse; it had been set solidly on rock. And everyone who listens to these words of mine but does not act on them will be like a fool who built his house on sand. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and buffeted the house. And it collapsed and was completely ruined."*

 Jesus gives the Word and even Him as his Father warns us that His Word might never be replaced with other things. Prayer is for the observance of the Word and so all the sacraments are aimed at the Word. Miracles, prophecies and all other signs, including the same prophecy, are for the Word. These things are valid if they take place in the highest obedience to the Commandment of Christ, otherwise they are works that will never give salvation. Building on these things our eternal home is foolishness. With the flood of the river of death, everything will collapse, finish and disappear. Nothing replaces the Word. Salvation is from the Word in the Word accepted and lived with faith.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints, give us the true faith in the Word.

### See that no one knows about this

### Is 29,17-24; Ps 26,1.4.13-14; Mt 9,27-31

**2 DECEMBER**

It is fair to ask: If Jesus is the salvation and redemption of the world, if He is the light of God in our land, if grace and truth are donated from him, if through Him one comes to the true knowledge of God, why does he ask the two healed blind to keep the miracle hidden? Can they be an obstacle for other blind since they still need to be healed? If one finds a source of life is it a good thing that he hides or that he indicates it to every other man? Four lepers find a source of nourishment and reveal it to a hungry city. Why does Jesus ask for silence?

*Elisha said: "Hear the word of the Lord! Thus says the Lord, 'At this time tomorrow a seah of fine flour will sell for a shekel, and two seahs of barley for a shekel, in the market of Samaria.'" But the adjutant on whose arm the king leaned, answered the man of God, "Even if the Lord were to make windows in heaven, how could this happen?" "You shall see it with your own eyes," Elisha said, "but you shall not eat of it." At the city gate were four lepers who were deliberating, "Why should we sit here until we die? If we decide to go into the city, we shall die there, for there is famine in the city. If we remain here, we shall die too. Come, let us desert to the camp of the Arameans. If they spare us, we live; if they kill us, we die." At twilight they left for the Arameans; but when they reached the edge of the camp, no one was there. The Lord had caused the army of the Arameans to hear the sound of chariots and horses, the din of a large army,*

*and they had reasoned among themselves, "The king of Israel has hired the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the borderlands to fight us." Then in the twilight they fled, abandoning their tents, their horses, and their asses, the whole camp just as it was, and fleeing for their lives. After the lepers reached the edge of the camp, they went first into one tent, ate and drank, and took silver, gold, and clothing from it, and went out and hid them. Back they came into another tent, took things from it, and again went out and hid them. Then they said to one another: "We are not doing right. This is a day of good news, and we are keeping silent. If we wait until morning breaks, we shall be blamed. Come, let us go and inform the palace." They came and summoned the city gatekeepers. "We went to the camp of the Arameans," they said, "but no one was there - not a human voice, only the horses and asses tethered, and the tents just as they were left." The gatekeepers announced this and it was reported within the palace (2Kings 7,1-11).*

Jesus asks that the miracle is kept hidden because the man falls easily into deception. He can seek Christ Jesus as a healing operator of the body and not as the One who is the true salvation, which is the liberation from the ancient evil that kills him. As blind in the body you can go into the kingdom of his Father, as dead in the soul you end up into eternal darkness. If everyone wants the healing of physical ailments, few are those who want deliverance from the death of the soul and spirit. Jesus did not come to heal the body, but the soul and spirit. The signs, that is, miracles are performed by him to certify that he is from God and he comes to bring the true God into every heart.

*And as Jesus passed on from there, two blind men followed (him), crying out, "Son of David, have pity on us!" When he entered the house, the blind men approached him and Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I can do this?" "Yes, Lord," they said to him. Then he touched their eyes and said, "Let it be done for you according to your faith." And their eyes were opened. Jesus warned them sternly, "See that no one knows about this." But they went out and spread word of him through all that land.*

 Jesus did not come to heal from physical ills. These are essence, substance, form, mode, part of our lives, as essence, substance, form and manner of his life is death on the Cross. When the soul is filled with grace and the spirit full of truth, because it is governed by the Holy Spirit, physical suffering is offered to God in redemption and atonement of sins. Jesus does not want confusion in his mission. For love he heals from the physical evil. For love, the healed must help Christ in his mission.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints make us true announcers of Jesus.

### The harvest is abundant but the labourers are few

### Is 30,19-21.23-26; Ps 146,1-6; Mt 9,35-10,1.6-8

**3 DECEMBER**

When one becomes the Gospel in the Gospel, each one personally accepts the mission to take the gospel and its every gift of grace and truth to the whole world. Might ever one man be present simultaneously in every place and in every man on earth? Man is a limit of time, place, space and presence. Moses had a small people to conduct. He feels the weight. He cannot do it alone. The Lord gives him other seventy men, so that they bear with him the weight of the whole people.

*When Moses heard the people, family after family, crying at the entrance of their tents, so that the Lord became very angry, he was grieved. "Why do you treat your servant so badly?" Moses asked the Lord. "Why are you so displeased with me that you burden me with all this people? Was it I who conceived all this people? or was it I who gave them birth, that you tell me to carry them at my bosom, like a foster father carrying an infant, to the land you have promised under oath to their fathers? Where can I get meat to give to all this people? For they are crying to me, 'Give us meat for our food.' I cannot carry all this people by myself, for they are too heavy for me. If this is the way you will deal with me, then please do me the favour of killing me at once, so that I need no longer face this distress." Then the Lord said to Moses, "Assemble for me seventy of the elders of Israel, men you know for true elders and authorities among the people, and bring them to the meeting tent. When they are in place beside you, I will come down and speak with you there. I will also take some of the spirit that is on you and will bestow it on them, that they may share the burden of the people with you. You will then not have to bear it by yourself. So Moses went out and told the people what the Lord had said.*

*Gathering seventy elders of the people, he had them stand around the tent. The Lord then came down in the cloud and spoke to him. Taking some of the spirit that was on Moses, he bestowed it on the seventy elders; and as the spirit came to rest on them, they prophesied. Now two men, one named Eldad and the other Medad, were not in the gathering but had been left in the camp. They too had been on the list, but had not gone out to the tent; yet the spirit came to rest on them also, and they prophesied in the camp. So, when a young man quickly told Moses, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp," Joshua, son of Nun, who from his youth had been Moses' aide, said, "Moses, my lord, stop them." But Moses answered him, "Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the people of the Lord were prophets! Would that the Lord might bestow his spirit on them all!" Then Moses retired to the camp, along with the elders of Israel (Num 11,10-17.24-30).*

Jesus Christ, becoming man and having to save humanity from the flesh, knows that he too is subject to the limit of the flesh. But he must be the only missionary of the Father until the advent of the new heavens and the new earth. How will it be possible to overcome the limits of the flesh? Assuming other meat not by incarnation, but by conformation. He takes other men, makes himself their lives in them, fills them with himself and with his Holy Spirit and in them, through them and with them he might remain forever the one and only missionary of the Father.

*Jesus went around to all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and curing every disease and illness. At the sight of the crowds, his heart was moved with pity for them because they were troubled and abandoned, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is abundant but the labourers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out labourers for his harvest." Then he summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits to drive them out and to cure every disease and every illness. Go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, make this proclamation: 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, drive out demons. Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give.*

The called also, being clothed and filled with Christ, take on the universal mission of Christ. They must bring Christ and his salvation, in the Holy Spirit, to every man. They must imitate in all Christ and ask the father that he associates other people to Christ. Prayer to the Father is the fruit of faith in the truth of the missionary of Jesus. A missionary without true faith is also a missionary without any prayer. He is a sterile missionary, without any effect of salvation, because he lacks every true faith.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints, renew us in the true faith.

### Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!

### Is 11,1-10; Ps 71,1-2.7-8.12-13.17; Rm 15,4-9; Mt 3,1-12

### 4 DECEMBER – II SUNDAY OF ADVENT – A

Jesus comes stipulates with the whole universe the New Covenant in his blood, on the basis of His Word. Every man, Jew or Greek, of the East or the West, of the north or the south, of every longitude and latitude, of the North or South Poles, must be called to be a part of this New and Eternal Covenant, in which it is determined that the life of God, in Christ, through Christ, with Christ, is given to him.

As it can be seen the conversion is not the transition to a more noble, high, real and perfect morality. Morality is a result of the conversion, it is not the end. The end of the conversion is to leave all that is Old Covenant, ancient religion, ancient philosophy, ancient theology, ancient thought, ancient god, ancient cult, ancient rituals, ancient mentality, ancient vision of God and old Law. Even Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, the prophets and the righteous must be left. They are all ways that lead to new life.

Way, truth, life of the New and Everlasting Covenant is the Lord Jesus. To Him we must be converted. We get converted to Him if we are converted to his every Word. He is also the Model that reveals how the Word must be lived. The required conversion is only one: becoming perfect images of Christ, as Christ is the perfect image of the Father. We get converted when we become the Word of Christ, the thought of Christ, the Life of Christ, the Truth of Christ, the Light of Christ and the Presence of Christ among men.

Conversion is not passing from the old to the New Word. It is accepting Christ as the only source of truth and grace. It is becoming in Christ the source of truth and grace to any other man. The one required is an ontological conversion. It is the change of essence, of heart, of mind and of substance. Our very substance must be the substance and life of Jesus Christ. From this change of substance, also comes the new morality. The new tree produces new fruits. It produces the fruits of Christ Jesus.

*In those days John the Baptist appeared, preaching in the desert of Judea (and) saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" It was of him that the prophet Isaiah had spoken when he said: "A voice of one crying out in the desert, 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.'" John wore clothing made of camel's hair and had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. At that time Jerusalem, all Judea, and the whole region around the Jordan were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the Jordan River as they acknowledged their sins.*

*When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce good fruit as evidence of your repentance. And do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you, God can raise up children to Abraham from these stones. Even now the ax lies at the root of the trees. Therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. I am baptizing you with water, for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is mightier than I. I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in his hand. He will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."*

Faced with this powerful call to conversion many have pulled back. All were willing to a new, brand new morality. No one was ready to leave his old world, his old rite, his old holiness to enter into the light of Christ, to make of Christ his true and only God, in whom to meet the true God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Today, this invitation to conversion is especially true for us today. Today, there is a risk for everyone to make a conversion in reverse.

Christ today *"is placed on the ropes."* He is in severe distress. He is hit with every low blow. Jews and Romans have pierced him in his physical body. We are stabbing him in his uniqueness of salvation, redemption, revelation, science and knowledge. They crucified him on a wood. We are crucifying him on falsehood and lies.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints, immerse us in Christ Jesus.

### As for you, your sins are forgiven

### Is 35,1-10; Ps 84,9-14; Lk 5,17-26

**5 DECEMBER**

The New Covenant is also New in relation to forgiveness. In the Ancient Covenant the sinner was obliged to ask for forgiveness. the Lord always gave his mercy to those who repented, resorted to him and submitted themselves to the ritual prescribed to have the remission of their sins. In the New Covenant first of all it is the Lord that offers reconciliation and forgiveness in Christ and always for him and in him through his ministers or administrators of his mysteries of grace and truth. As the Father, as Christ and in Christ, through Christ, with Christ, every disciple is sent to be reconciled with his brothers, before the celebration of the cult of his Eucharist.

*"You have heard that it was said to your ancestors, 'You shall not kill; and whoever kills will be liable to judgment.' But I say to you, whoever is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment, and whoever says to his brother, 'Raqa,' will be answerable to the Sanhedrin, and whoever says, 'You fool,' will be liable to fiery Gehenna. Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift (Mt 5,21-24).*

*And all this is from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ and given us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting their trespasses against them and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. So we are ambassadors for Christ, as if God were appealing through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who did not know sin, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him. Working together, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. For he says: "In an acceptable time I heard you, and on the day of salvation I helped you." Behold, now is a very acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation (2Cor 5,18-6,2).*

It is sin which makes the soul still, makes it of stone, incapable of any gesture of love, peace, reconciliation, justice, mercy and holiness. Sin deprives the heart of a man of every sensibility for the truth, goodness and piety. It make us non men and often even inhuman. Jesus sees the soul of this man and gives it freedom. Today this paralyzed man does not need anything else. He is capable of loving from his condition. Scribes and Pharisees know nothing of God and therefore know nothing of the lethal effects of evil when it is in the heart and soul. They are scandalized by the pardon given by Jesus to this. They ignore that every man must shout forgiveness to every other man. The Church must be the mother of forgiveness for herself before she can become a mother for forgiveness for others. She is for others if she is it first for herself.

*One day as Jesus was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and Jerusalem, and the power of the Lord was with him for healing. And some men brought on a stretcher a man who was paralyzed; they were trying to bring him in and set (him) in his presence. But not finding a way to bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on the stretcher through the tiles into the middle in front of Jesus. When he saw their faith, he said, "As for you, your sins are forgiven." Then the scribes and Pharisees began to ask themselves, "Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who but God alone can forgive sins?" Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them in reply, "What are you thinking in your hearts? Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins'' - he said to the man who was paralyzed, "I say to you, rise, pick up your stretcher, and go home." He stood up immediately before them, picked up what he had been lying on, and went home, glorifying God. Then astonishment seized them all and they glorified God, and, struck with awe, they said, "We have seen incredible things today."*

 Jesus does not let himself be troubled by murmurings of who knows neither God nor evil. He attests them that He has received from the Father all authority and power. He can forgive sin and can heal. He teaches his Church that her first moral duty is the liberation of man from sin. Then comes every other liberation and every other grace.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints, give us the truth of the Church.

### That one of these little ones be lost

### Is 40,1-11; Ps 95,1-3.10-13; Mt 18,12-14

### 6 DECEMBER

Never might one think big if first he does not think small. Taking care of the great problems of humanity, the Earth, the planet one can, provided that at the same time he takes care of the small problems of the Church, which then are the great problems that she must always attend to, worry and deal with the greatest care. Today we speak of the great problems of the suburbs, it is said that you have to leave the enclosure, we discuss of a Church in exit. They are all most holy things. The mission is in the nature of the Church. Reaching every person is in her vocation. Dealing with every issue that concerns man is her mission. Salvation is of the whole man and of every man.

This placed as the principle and essence of the Church's life, Jesus warns us that in the very heart of the Church, in the centre of each institution, large or small, universal or particular, there are some small, lost ones, people who are suffering. There exist subjects in the centre, as well as in the suburbs, we must take care of, paying complete attention, conveying every relief, bringing every comfort for their return to the full communion of faith, hope and charity. The mission of the Church will be strong in the suburbs if it will be much stronger within her. A Church that lets her children die inside in solitude because she must focus her attention outside of herself is certainly not the Church desired and thought of by the Lord Jesus.

If we observe well the life of Christ Jesus, he devoted all of his public life to the training, education, spiritual and moral elevation of his disciples. Whatever he did on the outside, he worked it for the formation of those who were with Him. The Church needs to heal herself if she wants to be effective in her work outside. What use is it bringing sheep within her fold, if then as soon as they go into it they are plagued by all the sheep already in it, suffering from every disease and sickness of the mind, heart and soul? What Jesus said to scribes and Pharisees applies also to the Church. First of all, the Gospel is written for the Church, before than for others.

*"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites. You lock the kingdom of heaven* [*8*](http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0839/__PVW.HTM#$37Y) *before human beings. You do not enter yourselves, nor do you allow entrance to those trying to enter. "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites. You traverse sea and land to make one convert, and when that happens you make him a child of Gehenna twice as much as yourselves. "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites. You pay tithes of mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier things of the law: judgment and mercy and fidelity. (But) these you should have done, without neglecting the others. Blind guides, who strain out the gnat and swallow the camel! "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites. You cleanse the outside of cup and dish, but inside they are full of plunder and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee, cleanse first the inside of the cup, so that the outside also may be lean. "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites. You are like whitewashed tombs, which appear beautiful on the outside, but inside are full of dead men's bones and every kind of filth. Even so, on the outside you appear righteous, but inside you are filled with hypocrisy and evildoing.*

The sheep that the shepherd goes in search of, is the one that is already his. She went out of the heart of Christ, he must bring her back into the heart of Christ. Pharisees and scribes are not invited by Christ to go and look for the pagans. They are urged to accept the Jews sinners, offering them the forgiveness of God, his grace and his mercy. The Jew is a lost sheep.

*What is your opinion? If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them goes astray, will he not leave the ninety-nine in the hills and go in search of the stray? And if he finds it, amen, I say to you, he rejoices more over it than over the ninety-nine that did not stray. In just the same way, it is not the will of your heavenly Father that one of these little ones be lost.*

Today, the lost sheep is the Christian who is in the Church and whom one no longer turns his sight to. Either the Church begins to cure every one of her children to bring him back into the heart of Christ, or all her work will be in vain. A church strong inside will always be a missionary Church outside. A Church weak inside will be weak outside.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints, help us to love the Church.

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Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints, help us to love the Church.

### Learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart

### Is 40,25-31; Ps 102,1-4.8.10; Mt 11,28-30

### 7 DECEMBER

In true faith the disciple must always walk in the footsteps of those who are appointed by God as guides, pastors, teachers, evangelisers, doctors and prophets. Paul invites those who the Lord has called for Him to the faith so that they walk, imitating his example. He is an imitator of Christ Jesus. They will imitate him that walks behind the Divine Master.

*Therefore, I urge you, be imitators of me (1Cor 4, 16). Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ (1Cor 11, 1). And the rest of the Jews (also) acted hypocritically along with him, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy (Gal 2, 13). So be imitators of God, as beloved children (Eph 5, 1).* *Join with others in being imitators of me, brothers, and observe those who thus conduct themselves according to the model you have in us (Phil 3, 17). And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, receiving the word in great affliction, with joy from the holy Spirit (1Ts 1, 6). For you, brothers, have become imitators of the churches of God that are in Judea in Christ Jesus. For you suffer the same things from your compatriots as they did from the Jews (1Ts 2, 14). For you know how one must imitate us. For we did not act in a disorderly way among you (2Ts 3, 7). Not that we do not have the right. Rather, we wanted to present ourselves as a model for you, so that you might imitate us (2Ts 3, 9). So that you may not become sluggish, but imitators of those who, through faith and patience, are inheriting the promises (Heb 6, 12). Remember your leaders who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith (Heb 13, 7). Beloved, do not imitate evil but imitate good. Whoever does what is good is of God; whoever does what is evil has never seen God (3Jn 1, 11).*

Paul can be imitated because he lives everything on the Lord Jesus model. It is as if Paul had always before his eyes the Master's life. He walks behind Christ the Lord, showing every virtue of Him. In none of them he is defective. In none he is lacking. Virtues are the dress of his spirit, the robe of his heart, the ornament of his soul. Paul lives nothing if not by letting himself be led by the holy virtues.

*We cause no one to stumble in anything, in order that no fault may be found with our ministry; on the contrary, in everything we commend ourselves as ministers of God, through much endurance, in afflictions, hardships, constraints, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labours, vigils, fasts; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, in a holy spirit, in unfeigned love, in truthful speech, in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness at the right and at the left; through glory and dishonour, insult and praise. We are treated as deceivers and yet are truthful; as unrecognized and yet acknowledged; as dying and behold we live; as chastised and yet not put to death; as sorrowful yet always rejoicing; as poor yet enriching many; as having nothing and yet possessing all things (2Cor 6,3-10).*

Jesus asks those who are weary and burdened to come to Him, because He gives all rest. But when does the Lord give comfort, peace, hope and relief? When you enter into his Word, he takes the yoke of his Gospel. Jesus restores in the Word, in the Gospel, never out of it. He brings all comfort to the heart when he is imitated in meekness and humility. In meekness you live every suffering for the Gospel, in humility you only and always look for the will of the Father to give it all obedience. Without meekness we rebel to every cross, either small or big. Without humility we run through human and not divine ways. You do not you live in the Word, according to the Word.

*"Come to me, all you who labour and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for your selves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light."*

 Without meekness you do not know how to stay on the Cross. Not even without humility you walk towards it. Jesus always walked in humility towards the Cross, his is a journey to Golgotha. In meekness he always knew how to endure all hardships that arose against him due to the Father's Word. He persevered to the end. He fulfilled all Scripture. He saved the world. He poured from the Cross, the Holy Spirit for the regeneration of every man. Humility and meekness are the virtues of Christ, they must be the virtues of all his disciples.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints make us imitators of Christ Jesus.

### Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord

### Gen 3,9-15.20; Ps 97,1-4; Eph 1,3-6.11-12; Lk 1,26-38

### 8 DECEMBER

*"Behold the handmaid of the Lord"*: this is the title that the Virgin Mary is given. The Angel calls her *"Full of grace."* She is full of grace. But the Heavenly Father did this. She did not fill herself with grace. She did not make herself Immaculate, Most Holy, Most Pure and Most Chaste. She was made. There are things that God does and things we can do. God always has to be given what is his. We have to give us what is ours. What can the Virgin Mary do for herself? By the grace of God and always with his holy help, she can do only one thing: *"Make herself handmaid of the Lord." "Living to hear his voice, to obey his every command, to perform his every order, to put into practice his every desire, to give life to all his will."* She can do this. None other is from Her. Everything else comes from God, because only God can accomplish it.

Let's go for a while into the Garden of Eden. Here , there is another woman, the first one created by God. Even to her the Lord had asked to be *"his servant"*, to live by listening to his Word, walking in his will, obeying the precept given to her. But she chose to be the servant of another master, the devil. *"Behold the handmaid of the Lord,"* Maria says. " *Behold the handmaid of the devil,"* Eve says. With what difference? The servant of the devil became the instrument of death, the mother of death. The handmaid of the Lord became the Mother of life, Mother of Eternal Life, Mother of the Son of the Most High, Mother of all believers in Christ Jesus. Everyone has to choose what he wants to be. This choice is the only thing that any man can do and is called to do. If you choose God and listen to the Lord, God will do everything in the faithful and persevering service. If you choose Satan, you will walk from death to death up to arriving to eternal death.

Today this is the confusion that reigns in the heart of man. He chooses to be *"the servant of Satan"*, to listen to the voice of Satan, to obey Satan, to follow his "Diktat", thinking that by following Satan the real progress for mankind can start. Never might life start from following Satan, but today society is all in the service of the prince of darkness and calls this discipleship *"human right"*. Abortion, divorce, euthanasia, genocide, the destruction of races and peoples, endless war, violence, the handing over of man to immorality and idolatry are rights. They are the servants of Satan and they wished they had the fruits of the service rendered to the Lord. The Church must cry out against this foolishness, never hide behind a silence that is true sin of omission. Tell me whom you serve and I will tell you the benefits that you produce. Today the world serves Satan. Its fruits are obvious to all: death, destruction, blood, murders and massacres.

*In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming to her, he said, "Hail, favoured one! The Lord is with you." But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."*

*But Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?" And the angel said to her in reply, "The holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; for nothing will be impossible for God." Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.*

 The Virgin Mary cries to us all that only one is the road of life. It descends from God on humanity by those who are declared servants of the Almighty, according to the Word that Jesus Lord makes resound in their hearts. Life is born on earth only from the right, humble and sincere service of the Lord. Who serves Satan generates death, all kind of death.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints make us true servants of the Lord.

### We played the flute for you, but you did not dance

### Is 48,17-19; Ps 1,1-4.6; Mt 11,16-19

### 9 DECEMBER

When a man falls in spiritual insensibility, it is a sign that he has far exceeded the limits of evil. Jeremiah denounces the exceeding of this limit, saying that the Lord's people by now, is no longer able even to blush. When you still have a minimum of conscience, before a strong admonition of the Lord, there is some blushing and some shame. You see evil and somehow you detest it. If you do not detest it, you recognize it as evil. Instead before the admonition of the Lord every one remained as stone. The heart was incapable of any repentance.

*To whom shall I speak? whom shall I warn, and be heard? See! their ears are uncircumcised, they cannot give heed; See, the word of the Lord has become for them an object of scorn, which they will not have. Therefore my wrath brims up within me, I am weary of holding it in; I will pour it out upon the child in the street, upon the young men gathered together. Yes, all will be taken, husband and wife, gray beard with ancient. Their houses will fall to strangers, their fields and their wives as well; For I will stretch forth my hand against those who dwell in this land, says the Lord. Small and great alike, all are greedy for gain; prophet and priest, all practice fraud. They would repair, as though it were nought, the injury to my people: "Peace, peace!" they say, though there is no peace. They are odious; they have done abominable things, yet they are not at all ashamed, they know not how to blush (Jer 6,10-15).*

*Tell them: Thus says the Lord: When someone falls, does he not rise again? if he goes astray, does he not turn back? Why do these people rebel with obstinate resistance? Why do they cling to deceptive idols, refuse to turn back? I listen closely: they speak what is not true; No one repents of his wickedness, saying, "What have I done!" Everyone keeps on running his course, like a steed dashing into battle. Even the stork in the air knows it seasons; Turtledove, swallow and thrush observe their time of return, But my people do not know the ordinance of the Lord. How can you say, "We are wise, we have the law of the Lord"? Why, that has been changed into falsehood by the lying pen of the scribes! The wise are confounded, dismayed and ensnared; Since they have rejected the word of the Lord, of what avail is their wisdom? Therefore, I will give their wives to strangers, their fields to spoilers. Small and great alike, all are greedy for gain, prophet and priest, all practice fraud. They would repair, as though it were nought, the injury to the daughter of my people: "Peace, peace!" they say, though there is no peace. They are odious; they have done abominable things, yet they are not at all ashamed, they know not how to blush (Jer 8, 4-12).*

John the Baptist comes. He is an austere man. He feeds on locusts and wild honey. He wears the austere dress of the prophet, made of camel's hair with a leather belt around his hips. What do people say about him? That he is a possessed? Why is he a follower or a possessed by Satan? Because he lives a different life than that of every other man. To avoid repentance they accuse him of being possessed by a devil. Jesus comes. He lives the life of every man, without showing any difference, if not in holiness, morality, justice and in the full observance of the Commandments. What do people say about him? That they do not notice anything special. They accuses him of sharing the life of men. It is a people unable to open up to God, the true God. It is insensitive to all truth.

*"To what shall I compare this generation? It is like children who sit in marketplaces and call to one another, 'We played the flute for you, but you did not dance, we sang a dirge but you did not mourn.' For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they said, 'He is possessed by a demon.' The Son of Man came eating and drinking and they said, 'Look, he is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.' But wisdom is vindicated by her works."*

 The prophet does not have to expect any result outside of the fruit that the prophecy produces. What is the fruit of true prophecy? That of justifying God of injustice, of abandonment and of not having fulfilled his Word. Christ is sent to justify the Father before all accusations of injustice on the part of men. Tomorrow nobody must say to God: *"I was lost because you have not fulfilled your word."* This eternal law also applies to the Church. Her prophecy has to justify God.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints make us true prophets for the Lord.

### Elijah will indeed come and restore all things

### Sir 48,1-4.9-11; Ps 79,2-3.15-16.18-19; Mt 17,10-13

### 10 DECEMBER

The Prophet Malachi (around 450 b. C.) is the first to prophesy the coming of Elijah to prepare the Lord's day. His prophecy is clothed in highly apocalyptic hues. The coming of Elijah would precede the final judgment of God upon humanity. In fact, we speak of a great and terrible day of the Lord. This day may be just that of the final judgment. Elijah would come to prepare the hearts to face this day.

*Remember the law of Moses my servant, which I enjoined him on Horeb, The statutes and ordinances for all Israel. Lo, I will send you Elijah, the prophet, Before the day of the Lord comes, the great and terrible day, To turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, Lest I come and strike the land with doom. Lo, I will send you Elijah, the prophet, Before the day of the Lord comes, the great and terrible day (Mal 3,22-224).*

The Book of Sirach (about 130 b. C.) resumes the prophecy, strips it of the apocalyptic hues, making the coming of Elijah to become a return on our earth to accomplish a wondrous work of mission in relation to the conversion of his people. There is a judgment of God coming upon his people and Elijah with his preaching has to prevent it, bringing back all hearts to his God. Change The perspective of his arrival changes totally. He comes to shout to every man to return to his Lord and Father.

*Till like a fire there appeared the prophet whose words were as a flaming furnace. Their staff of bread he shattered, in his zeal he reduced them to straits; By God's word he shut up the heavens and three times brought down fire. How awesome are you, ELIJAH! Whose glory is equal to yours? You brought a dead man back to life from the nether world, by the will of the Lord. You sent kings down to destruction, and nobles, from their beds of sickness. You heard threats at Sinai, at Horeb avenging judgments. You anointed kings who should inflict vengeance, and a prophet as your successor. You were taken aloft in a whirlwind, in a chariot with fiery horses. You are destined, it is written, in time to come to put an end to wrath before the day of the Lord, To turn back the hearts of fathers toward their sons, and to re-establish the tribes of Jacob. Blessed is he who shall have seen you before he dies (Sir 48,1-11).*

The Angel Raphael, proclaiming the birth of John the Baptist, brings the ultimate truth about the coming of Elijah. It is not the person of Elijah that returns. Instead God clothes of his Spirit of Fortitude the child that will be born of Zechariah and Elizabeth. This son will be the one that will prepare the way for the Lord, but not to the Lord that comes for the judgment, but to the Messiah of the Lord that will come to give definitive fulfilment to every promise of God. John with all the power of the Spirit of Elijah must preach conversion, preparing every heart to welcome his Saviour and his Lord, his God.

*But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, because your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall name him John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the sight of (the) Lord. He will drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will be filled with the holy Spirit even from his mother's womb, and he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. He will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah to turn the hearts of fathers toward children and the disobedient to the understanding of the righteous, to prepare a people fit for the Lord" (Lk 1,13-17).*

Jesus confirms that the word of Malachi, of Sirach and the Angel Raphael has been perfectly fulfilled in John the Baptist. Jesus also says that they treated him as they wanted, by beheading him. The same lot will befall even to him. But he will not be beheaded, he will be handed over to the Gentiles to be crucified. In the three words, one truth remains stable and unchangeable: Jesus is the Lord who comes for the salvation.

*Then the disciples asked him, "Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" He said in reply, "Elijah will indeed come and restore all things; but I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him but did to him whatever they pleased. So also will the Son of Man suffer at their hands." Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them of John the Baptist.*

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints make us precursors of Christ Jesus.

**DECEMBER 2016**

## SECOND DECADE OF DECEMBER

### The deaf hear, the dead are raised

### Is 35,1-6a.8a.10; Ps 145,6-10; James 5,7-10; Mt 11,2-11

### 11 DECEMBER – III SUNDAY OF ADVENT – A

Isaiah proclaims a great spiritual resurrection among the people of God.

*O Lord, oppressed by your punishment, we cried out in anguish under your chastising. As a woman about to give birth writhes and cries out in her pains, so were we in your presence, O Lord. We conceived and writhed in pain, giving birth to wind; Salvation we have not achieved for the earth, the inhabitants of the world cannot bring it forth. But your dead shall live, their corpses shall rise; awake and sing, you who lie in the dust. For your dew is a dew of light, and the land of shades gives birth. Go, my people, enter your chambers, and close your doors behind you; Hide yourselves for a brief moment, until the wrath is past. See, the Lord goes forth from his place, to punish the wickedness of the earth's inhabitants; The earth will reveal the blood upon her, and no longer conceal her slain (Is 26,16-21).*

Ezekiel shows that the resurrection will occur because on the Lord's command, the prophet calls the Spirit from the four winds and It comes and gives life to some dry bones.

*The hand of the Lord came upon me, and he led me out in the spirit of the Lord and set me in the center of the plain, which was now filled with bones. He made me walk among them in every direction so that I saw how many they were on the surface of the plain. How dry they were! He asked me: Son of man, can these bones come to life? "Lord God," I answered, "you alone know that." Then he said to me: Prophesy over these bones, and say to them: Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! Thus says the Lord God to these bones: See! I will bring spirit into you, that you may come to life. I will put sinews upon you, make flesh grow over you, cover you with skin, and put spirit in you so that you may come to life and know that I am the Lord. I prophesied as I had been told, and even as I was prophesying I heard a noise; it was a rattling as the bones came together, bone joining bone. I saw the sinews and the flesh come upon them, and the skin cover them, but there was no spirit in them. Then he said to me: Prophesy to the spirit, prophesy, son of man, and say to the spirit: Thus says the Lord God: From the four winds come, O spirit, and breathe into these slain that they may come to life. I prophesied as he told me, and the spirit came into them; they came alive and stood upright, a vast army. Then he said to me: Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They have been saying, "Our bones are dried up, our hope is lost, and we are cut off." Therefore, prophesy and say to them: Thus says the Lord God: O my people, I will open your graves and have you rise from them, and bring you back to the land of Israel. Then you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and have you rise from them, O my people! I will put my spirit in you that you may live, and I will settle you upon your land; thus you shall know that I am the Lord. I have promised, and I will do it, says the Lord (Ez 37,1-14).*

Jesus gives as a sign of his Messianic truth the fulfilment of these prophecies. His real work of spiritual resurrection which will become eternal resurrection.

*When John heard in prison of the works of the Messiah, he sent his disciples to him with this question, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?" Jesus said to them in reply, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind regain their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the good news proclaimed to them. And blessed is the one who takes no offense at me." As they were going off, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John, "What did you go out to the desert to see? A reed swayed by the wind? Then what did you go out to see? Someone dressed in fine clothing? Those who wear fine clothing are in royal palaces. Then why did you go out? To see a prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written: 'Behold, I am sending my messenger ahead of you; he will prepare your way before you.' Amen, I say to you, among those born of women there has been none greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.*

Old Simeon's prophecy is fulfilled in Him: *"He is here for the fall and rising of many in Israel. A sign of contradiction so that many hearts will be revealed."* For him, through the Holy Spirit that He will pour from his pierced body, the whole world might be reborn to a new life, can rise from its sin and its death.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints make us children of the resurrection.

### Where was John's baptism from?

### Nm 24,2-7.15-17b; Ps 24,4-9; Mt 21,23-27

### 12 DECEMBER

The Church does not want her children to become like the scribes, Pharisees, chief priests, elders of the people, that is refined diplomacy people that before the truth of Jesus the Lord juggles so as not to cry out the truth with strength, courage, determination, conviction and the Holy Spirit firmness. Christ cannot be worshiped in the dungeons of our churches and not even in the darkest depths of consciences. What is in the heart must be on the lips and what is in the Church must be brought out, with our most pure and holy profession of faith, truth and justice.

Jesus asks everyone to assume his greatest responsibility. From the Supreme Pastor or Shepherd of the whole Church, going through the whole apostolic succession, continuing with priests who of it are special collaborators, to every baptized and confirmed person, is incumbent the duty of preaching, proclaiming, announcing, shouting and witnessing Christ in his most perfect and "radical" truth, without shame or fear or hesitation, or diabolical diplomacy or other satanic inventions that all seek to hide the truth of Christ, the one and only salvation of man, the one and only Redeemer of mankind lying in the darkness and the shadow of death.

The Christian, whoever he is, is the life of Christ in the midst of his brothers, in the world. As Christ is the life of the Father and always testified the father with words and deeds, so it must be for the Christian. As the sun gives off heat and light and it is sun because it gives off these things, so the Christian is Christian if he emanates Christ in words and deeds. If Christ is not given off by him, he is not a Christian. He carries only the name, but to his injury. This name will condemn him for eternity, because he has not given off, not manifested, revealed, confessed and showed Christ in all his power of grace, truth, holiness, new life and greatness of Holy Spirit.

Never might the Christian be divested, undressed of his truth. The Pope's truth is his being the Vicar of Christ, the presence of Christ, the manifestation of Christ, the truth of Christ, the holiness of Christ, Christ's prophecy, revelation of Christ and the Word of Christ. Christ is his new essence. Christ is not a mission he can also forget at times. Christ is his life. The same applies also for each successor of the Apostles, that must guarantee the truth of Christ in every place on earth. This truth also applies and obliges every other baptized and confirmed. If you do not obey the own truth, there is no obedience to the Gospel. As Christ in the Holy Spirit obeyed his truth that constituted him Christ, so also who became Christ in Christ must obey his truth that makes him Christ in the world. The truth of Christ urges us to be Christ.

*When he had come into the temple area, the chief priests and the elders of the people approached him as he was teaching and said, "By what authority are you doing these things? And who gave you this authority?" Jesus said to them in reply, "I shall ask you one question, and if you answer it for me, then I shall tell you by what authority I do these things. Where was John's baptism from? Was it of heavenly or of human origin?" They discussed this among themselves and said, "If we say 'Of heavenly origin,' he will say to us, 'Then why did you not believe him?' But if we say, 'Of human origin,' we fear the crowd, for they all regard John as a prophet." So they said to Jesus in reply, "We do not know." He himself said to them, "Neither shall I tell you by what authority I do these things.*

Not being Christ, not manifesting Christ, not standing up for Christ, not bearing witness to Christ is unworthy of a Christian. Jesus warns us. If salt loses its flavour it is good for nothing but to be thrown and trampled by men. If the world tramples us it is not for the strength and satanic power that is in the world. The world must crucify us, not step on. If it tramples us it is because we have become Christians without Christ, we are turned off light, tasteless salt, people who are stripped of Christ considering him an unnecessary burden. This new diabolical invention of the One God, to whom Christ is sacrificed, does not it evidence that we have become tasteless salt? Jesus does not want these Christians. He wants them true salt, true light and true Christs in this world.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, the Angels, the Saints make us true Christians in Christ.

### Son, go out and work in the vineyard today

### Soph 3,1-2.9-13; Ps 33,2-3.6-7.17-19.23; Mt 21,28-32

### 13 DECEMBER

Jesus does not want his Christian disciples with a fake yes, the word given but not observed, men who enter into the covenant with God but later do not observe anything of what was promised. Well, every sacrament is granted on a word given from the man to his God. If this word were not given, no sacrament could be celebrated. This applies to Baptism, Confirmation, Matrimony, Holy Eucharist and Confession. Let us read for a moment the yes required in Marriage and we will understand everything.

*Have you come to marry, without any constraint, freely and aware of the significance of your decision? Newlyweds: Yes. Are you willing in the new way of marriage to love and honour one another for a lifetime? Newlyweds: Yes. Are you willing to accept with love the children God will give you and to educate them according to the law of Christ and his Church? Newlyweds: Yes. So if it is your intention to join in marriage, give yourself the right hand and declare before God and his Church your consent. I accept you as my wife... to be my husband. With the grace of Christ I promise to be always faithful, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health and to love and honour you all the days of my life. May the almighty and merciful Lord confirm the consent that you have manifested before the Church and deign to fill you with his blessings. Let no man put asunder what God joins.*

Before a solemn yes, that engages for a life time, pronounced before God as a witness, celebrated the marriage on God as guarantor of the covenant and blessing, can you deny what was promised? Let us think for a moment: If Jesus first had said the Father: "I make myself a man for the salvation of men", promising an eternal yes and then he had not maintained it, mankind would have remained forever in its death. For his yes said and kept life came on our earth. Let us remind it: the yes said in the celebration of the sacraments is not said to the man. It is said to God. God gives his grace on our yes. If we said no, the celebration would be immediately stopped. The subject of the celebration of the sacraments that is man is lacking.

Today we have created a Christian of great fiction. He says yes only with his mouth. Not only is, his yes null before God, but also before men. One time, even a civil and social commitment was assumed before God. There was some sign of transcendence. Today it is taken on the personal honour and conscience. What is this honour and what is this conscience? Not having honour and not having any conscience. If one breaks the yes said solemnly to God, might he ever remain stable in a yes told to men on his honour? Who does not respect the honour of God, never might he respect his own. We have created a society of promises and false oaths.

*"What is your opinion? A man had two sons. He came to the first and said, 'Son, go out and work in the vineyard today.' He said in reply, 'I will not,' but afterwards he changed his mind and went. The man came to the other son and gave the same order. He said in reply, 'Yes, sir,' but did not go. Which of the two did his father's will?" They answered, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Amen, I say to you, tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God before you. When John came to you in the way of righteousness, you did not believe him; but tax collectors and prostitutes did. Yet even when you saw that, you did not later change your minds and believe him.*

Jesus does not give a new teaching to the world. He reiterates the prophecy of Ezekiel, which is pure will of his Father. He is fair who dwells in his justice. He is unfair who steps out of his righteousness. If the righteous comes out of justice, he becomes unfair. If the unjust enters the justice becomes just. Pharisees, scribes, chief priests and elders of the people came out of justice. They are not righteous. They refused to enter. They remain unjust. Prostitutes and tax collectors were unjust. They entered in the righteousness of God, they have become righteous. First, they were sinners, offenders. But, now they are loyal servants of God, because they walk in his Commandments and observe his Law. No one is righteous because he was righteous and no one is unjust because he was unjust. No one is faithful because he was faithful and no one is unfaithful because he was unfaithful.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints make us just and faithful in Christ.

### Go and tell John what you have seen and heard

### Is 45,6b-8.18.21b-25; Ps 84,9-14; Lk 7,19-23

### 14 DECEMBER

According to the testimonies of the Gospel we that know by divine revelation not only John the Baptist presents Jesus to the world as the Messiah of the Lord. He also indicates him as the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire and also as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. He knows by certainty drawn in God who Jesus is. He is the one who has passed ahead of him because he is before him. The before of Jesus is an eternal before.

*A man named John was sent from God. He was not the light, but came to testify to the light. John testified to him and cried out, saying, "This was he of whom I said, 'The one who is coming after me ranks ahead of me because he existed before me'" (Jn 1,6.8.15).* *The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. He is the one of whom I said, 'A man is coming after me who ranks ahead of me because he existed before me.' I did not know him, but the reason why I came baptizing with water was that he might be made known to Israel." John testified further, saying, "I saw the Spirit come down like a dove from the sky and remain upon him. I did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'On whomever you see the Spirit come down and remain, he is the one who will baptize with the holy Spirit.' Now I have seen and testified that he is the Son of God." The next day John was there again with two of his disciples and as he watched Jesus walk by, he said, "Behold, the Lamb of God" (Jn 1,29-36). John answered and said, "No one can receive anything except what has been given him from heaven. You yourselves can testify that I said (that) I am not the Messiah, but that I was sent before him. The one who has the bride is the bridegroom; the best man, who stands and listens for him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. So this joy of mine has been made complete. He must increase; I must decrease" (Jn 3,127-40).*

*I am baptizing you with water, for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is mightier than I. I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in his hand. He will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire" (Mt 3,11-12).*

John the Baptist knows nothing on the modes that are the true essence of the mission of Jesus the Lord. The latter were not revealed to him. John knows that by now his days come to an end. If Jesus is the Messiah and He knows he is the Messiah, everyone must go to Christ. He, too, John, if he had been alive would have had to go to Jesus to enter into the fullness of grace and truth. His disciples remain and have to go to Christ. He sends them to Jesus so that they reassure their hearts and know the truth, consecrate their lives to the truth, adhering to the message of God's Messiah. But it is not Jesus the one who must reassure the disciples of John, but it is up to John, it is obligation to send them all to Christ the Lord, as the true fulfilment of their expectations. It is the responsibility of every teacher to direct to the supreme Teacher.

*The disciples of John told him about all these things. John summoned two of his disciples and sent them to the Lord to ask, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?" When the men came to him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to you to ask, 'Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?'" At that time he cured many of their diseases, sufferings, and evil spirits; he also granted sight to many who were blind. And he said to them in reply, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind regain their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the good news proclaimed to them. And blessed is the one who takes no offense at me."*

Christ is the only Saviour, Redeemer, Messiah of every man. No one either in the Church or in the world might ever replace him. No one must be made master in his place. He deceives himself and the whole world. All have only one obligation: seeking Christ, sending Christ to Christ and giving Christ. A man that attracts disciples after him, removing them to Christ deprives them of true salvation. He makes them spiritual eunuchs. He makes them lifeless. It is certainly not loving the man when one deprives him of his eternal principle of life.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints make us be true disciples of Jesus.

### Rejected the plan of God for themselves

### Is 54,1-10; Ps 29,2.4-6.11-12; Lk 7,24-30

### 15 DECEMBER

God does not send vainly his prophets and messengers in the world. He sends them to call every man to conversion, to repentance, so that they invite everyone to accept his will to enter into the mystery of his salvation. Pharisees and teachers of the Law do not seek the truth that John proclaims. They see him as a threat to their religion. Inviting to conversion is a clear proof of the moral falsity, doctrine the Lord's people pours in. They take care and worry about of everything, except than bringing the people to God and God to the people. They live in an artificial religion of plastic, in which there is no room either for the Lord, or for whoever seeks him, or for anyone who is sent by God for the gift of His truth and His Word.

*And this is the testimony of John. When the Jews from Jerusalem sent priests and Levites (to him) to ask him, "Who are you?" he admitted and did not deny it, but admitted, "I am not the Messiah." So they asked him, "What are you then? Are you Elijah?" And he said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" He answered, "No." So they said to him, "Who are you, so we can give an answer to those who sent us? What do you have to say for yourself?" He said: "I am 'the voice of one crying out in the desert, "Make straight the way of the Lord,"' as Isaiah the prophet said." Some Pharisees were also sent. They asked him, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Messiah or Elijah or the Prophet?" John answered them, "I baptize with water; but there is one among you whom you do not recognize, the one who is coming after me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to untie." This happened in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing (Jn 1,19-28).*

*At that time Jerusalem, all Judea, and the whole region around the Jordan were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the Jordan River as they acknowledged their sins. When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce good fruit as evidence of your repentance. And do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you, God can raise up children to Abraham from these stones. Even now the ax lies at the root of the trees. Therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire (Mt 3,5-10).*

John does not let himself be fooled by appearances and unmasks the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees. They do not seek God. They have only one desire in their hearts: preserving inviolate and intact their glory, their authority and their prestige among the people of God. If to preserve all this it is necessary to submit to an external rite, nothing prohibits it to them. But this is hypocrisy, deceit and falsehood. It is an outright use of the prophet for sinful purposes. It is a true scam played against the Lord's people. John does not lend himself to such a manipulation of sin and publicly denounces their falsity, apostrophizing them *"brood of vipers"*. They are poisonous snakes that know well how to disguise, hide and be in ambush even in holy things, remaining like stones.

*When the messengers of John had left, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John. "What did you go out to the desert to see - a reed swayed by the wind? Then what did you go out to see? Someone dressed in fine garments? Those who dress luxuriously and live sumptuously are found in royal palaces. Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom scripture says: 'Behold, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, he will prepare your way before you.' I tell you, among those born of women, no one is greater than John; yet the least in the kingdom of God is greater than he." (All the people who listened, including the tax collectors, and who were baptized with the baptism of John, acknowledged the righteousness of God; but the Pharisees and scholars of the law, who were not baptized by him, rejected the plan of God for themselves.)*

For Jesus, John the Baptist is the true light that leads to Him, in whom the real mystery of salvation is carried out. Having Pharisees and teachers of the Law rejected the baptism of John, they have thwarted the plan of God on them. Everyone before the prophet of the living God must assume his personal responsibility of resurrection or perdition, of life of death, of light or darkness. Whoever receives the prophet is saved.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints make us always from the living Word.

### He was a burning and shining lamp

### Is 56,1-3a.6-8; Ps 66,2-3.5.7-8; Jn 5,33-36

### 16 DECEMBER

The truth must always bear witness to the truth. By honouring the truth the Heavenly Father from whom all truth is born is honoured. He is the eternal truth and every truth that rises in history, always comes out from his heart. Jesus, eternal, celestial, divine, embodied and lived truth, realized in its entirety, bearing witness to the truth of John, it is to his Father that he testifies. John was made a true lamp that burns and shines by his Father. Who loves the Father loves the truth of the Father in whatever form it were to be manifested. Who does not love the truth, who despises, denies and fights it, not only rejects, denies and fights the Lord, who is its Eternal Author, he may also come to sin against the Holy Ghost, contesting the known truth. This is a sin that will never be forgiven.

For a son of Abraham, who is professed worshiper of the true God it is inconceivable that he could hate, fight and despise the truth. Not only does he despise God, but also his father according to the flesh because he did not become a father in faith, according to the faith. This same affirmation also applies to the disciple of Jesus. If this despises the truth, he does not only despise the Heavenly Father, but also the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth; Christ the Lord, who in order to affirm the truth that the Father has written for him, died on a cross; the Church sent into the world to proclaim Christ the truth and grace of all men; his brothers, confessors and martyrs who for the truth have shed their blood. The Christian has a high vocation: being in the world the *"true sacrament"* of God's truth, revealed and realized in Christ, entrusted to the Church.

For the Christian, kneaded by the Holy Spirit not of dust of the ground, but of the truth of Christ Jesus, it must become metaphysically impossible to deny and despise the truth. He who is always from the truth must confess every other truth. How is it then possible that the Christian loves falsehood, walks in falsehood, propagates and spreads falsehood, against the truth that he himself is, that the God whom he loves is? This happens when the disciple of Jesus comes out of the Word. Coming out of the Word, he comes out of the truth, he is delivered to falsehood, deceit and lie. The Word is for him custody, protection, defence and care. Dwelling and walking in the Word he dwells and walks in the truth. If he comes out of the Word, he comes out of the truth, it becomes impossible to him to recognize the truth because the truth is recognized and welcomed from the truth.

*You sent emissaries to John, and he testified to the truth. I do not accept testimony from a human being, but I say this so that you may be saved. He was a burning and shining lamp, and for a while you were content to rejoice in his light. But I have testimony greater than John's. The works that the Father gave me to accomplish, these works that I perform testify on my behalf that the Father has sent me.*

Today, in this time of confusion, in which even a simple depiction of what happened with the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, is used as a stone of scandal in a way as of a respect of others thoughts and religious structures, it is urgent that the Christian is clothed with strength and firmness, he is burning and shining lamp to illuminate the world with the light of Jesus the Lord. The man is not loved by hiding him the light from which his salvation is. But who is foolish is not others, it is right the disciple of Jesus, who, having become darkness with darkness, from darkness does not see the mystery of Christ, which is eternal life for the whole world and always from the darkness he is made paladin of the most absurd things. And so from who is in darkness, the Christian is obliged to hide the light of salvation and forced to accept darkness as the source of true progress among peoples. The Christian is led to turn off the light in the name of darkness and asked to welcome darkness as a way for the renewal of the peoples. If this is not evil cunning, what else could be called diabolical and Satanic cunning? When a Christian becomes a fool he is capable of every folly.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints make us always light from light.

### Boaz became the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth

### Gen 49,2.8-10; Ps 71,1-4ab.7-8.17; Mt 1,1-17

### 17 DECEMBER

In the genealogy of Jesus, there are four women. The most pure faith (Raab), the most holy love (Ruth), but also incest (Tamar) and adultery (Bathsheba) are revealed in them. Genealogy is not just the flesh of Abraham, but also of other peoples.

*She took off her widow's garb, veiled her face by covering herself with a shawl, and sat down at the entrance to Enaim, which is on the way to Timnah; for she was aware that, although Shelah was now grown up, she had not been given to him in marriage. When Judah saw her, he mistook her for a harlot, since she had covered her face. So he went over to her at the roadside, and not realizing that she was his daughter-in-law, he said, "Come, let me have intercourse with you." She replied, "What will you pay me for letting you have intercourse with me?" He answered, "I will send you a kid from the flock." "Very well," she said, "provided you leave a pledge until you send it." Judah asked, "What pledge am I to give to you?" She answered, "Your seal and cord, and the staff you carry." So he gave them to her and had intercourse with her, and she conceived by him (Gen 38,14-19).*

*"I know that the Lord has given you the land, that a dread of you has come upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are overcome with fear of you. For we have heard how the Lord dried up the waters of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and how you dealt with Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites beyond the Jordan, whom you doomed to destruction. At these reports, we are disheartened; everyone is discouraged because of you, since the Lord, your God, is God in heaven above and on earth below. Now then, swear to me by the Lord that, since I am showing kindness to you, you in turn will show kindness to my family; and give me an unmistakable token that you are to spare my father and mother, brothers and sisters, and all their kin, and save us from death." "We pledge our lives for yours," the men answered her. "If you do not betray this errand of ours, we will be faithful in showing kindness to you when the Lord gives us the land" (Jos 2,8-14).*

*"See now!" she said, "your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and her god. Go back after your sister-in-law!" But Ruth said, "Do not ask me to abandon or forsake you! for wherever you go I will go, wherever you lodge I will lodge, your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Wherever you die I will die, and there be buried. May the Lord do so and so to me, and more besides, if aught but death separates me from you!" (Ruth 1,15-17). At the turn of the year, when kings go out on campaign, David sent out Joab along with his officers and the army of Israel, and they ravaged the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. David, however, remained in Jerusalem. One evening David rose from his siesta and strolled about on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing, who was very beautiful. David had inquiries made about the woman and was told, "She is Bathsheba, daughter of Eliam, and wife of (Joab's armor-bearer) Uriah the Hittite." Then David sent messengers and took her. When she came to him, he had relations with her, at a time when she was just purified after her monthly period. She then returned to her house (2Sam 11,1-4).*

Christ's flesh is not drawn from a man, but from a woman. It is most pure flesh drawn from the Virgin Mary through the work of the Holy Spirit. Joseph gives legal offspring. We know that Mary is the flesh of Abraham. We do not know whether it is also flesh of David.

*The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham became the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers. Judah became the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar. Perez became the father of Hezron, Hezron the father of Ram, Ram the father of Amminadab. Amminadab became the father of Nahshon, Nahshon the father of Salmon, Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab. Boaz became the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth. Obed became the father of Jesse, Jesse the father of David the king. David became the father of Solomon, whose mother had been the wife of Uriah. Solomon became the father of Rehoboam, Rehoboam the father of Abijah, Abijah the father of Asaph. Asaph became the father of Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, Joram the father of Uzziah. Uzziah became the father of Jotham, Jotham the father of Ahaz, Ahaz the father of Hezekiah. Hezekiah became the father of Manasseh, Manasseh the father of Amos, Amos the father of Josiah. Josiah became the father of Jechoniah and his brothers at the time of the Babylonian exile. After the Babylonian exile, Jechoniah became the father of Shealtiel, Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, Zerubbabel the father of Abiud. Abiud became the father of Eliakim, Eliakim the father of Azor, Azor the father of Zadok. Zadok became the father of Achim, Achim the father of Eliud, Eliud the father of Eleazar. Eleazar became the father of Matthan, Matthan the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary. Of her was born Jesus who is called the Messiah. Thus the total number of generations from Abraham to David is fourteen generations; from David to the Babylonian exile, fourteen generations; from the Babylonian exile to the Messiah, fourteen generations.*

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints, illuminate us on the mystery of Jesus.

### This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about

### Is 7,10-14; Ps 23,1-6; Rm 1,1-7; Mt 1,18-24

### 18 DECEMBER – IV SUNDAY OF ADVENT – A

What is divinely beautiful, wonderful, in the Holy Scripture is the sublime truth about the origin of everything, every event that takes place. We know that it all starts from the will of God, by his omnipotence, by his Lordship. Nothing in Scripture is by the will of man. Only sin is by the will of man. Everything else is done by direct or indirect will, by call or motion of the heart and mind through the gift of the powerful grace of wisdom and intelligence.

But man is devoid of knowledge of the past, present and future. Without the purest light on these three realities - past, present and future - man's life becomes not only incomprehensible, but also impossible to be lived. True light is missing. He does not know where he comes from, what he must do and where he is directed. Then, if to this lack of light, we also add those who with diabolical wickedness obscure it from the minds and hearts, we know why the world today is so bad. It lacks all real light.

In the birth of Jesus, the eternal Word of the Father, nothing is by the will of man. On the contrary, everything is by the decision from above. It is the Father the Lord of Jesus Christ and it is the Father who has everything in his hands. The Father needs a body from which to draw the true humanity of his Son and he creates it holy, undefiled and pure. It is the body of the Virgin of Nazareth. However, he needs a true family in which the child must be born and grow and even this family Lord is the one who choses it. Nothing is from the flesh.

The Virgin Mary is pregnant of Christ Jesus. Joseph does not want to enter into this mystery too high for him and he retires in silence, in secret. It is a fact that concerns Mary and it is she who must live it in full. He decides to get out for ever from her life. If she is of God she cannot be his. But this is not the plan of God. The Lord has chosen him as the husband of the Mother of his son and He asks him to take Mary as his wife. And what does Joseph do? He also hands himself over to the mystery. He surrenders.

The Lord asks him to be for Mary a very chaste husband and he hands himself over to the will of his God. His body is of God. Let him do of it what he pleases. He wants him to be the Father of adoption for his Eternal Son, to make him an offspring of David and Joseph quickly, without waiting for even a moment, obeys his God, putting himself entirely at his disposal. Joseph also says to the Angel in his heart: *"Behold the servant of the Lord. Be done unto me according to his will."*

*Now this is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found with child through the holy Spirit. Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man, yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly. Such was his intention when, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means "God is with us." When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home.*

Joseph for Jesus is not only the Father of adoption, the legal Father, he is also an exemplary Father. He is the perfect image of that obedience which every man owes to his God. Even Jesus has already said and tomorrow will have to say it even louder: *"On the scroll of the book it stands written that I fulfil your will. I so desire and your law is deep in my heart." "Behold the Servant of the Lord. Be done of me, my body, my soul, my spirit, according to your eternal will".* Mary and Joseph are this perfect exemplarity for Jesus. Under the shadow of this faith he grows up and breathes this faith. He sees concretely what faith is and is prepared to live it till right on the cross.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints make us exemplary in faith.

### He will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb

### Jdg 13,2-7.24-25a; Ps 70,3-6.16-17; Lk 1,5-25

### 19 DECEMBER

The history of salvation is the work that God accomplishes through man, in man and for man. Without the man he can accomplish nothing for men. The man is the instrument, in Christ he becomes the sacrament: of salvation, redemption and true justification. But men are not all equal. There is the man who believes instantly as Noah and Abraham. Instead, there is the man who must be almost be obliged, like Moses. There are men who need signs. There are other men that God prepares before being formed in the maternal womb. The first of whom this preparation is revealed is Jeremiah.

*Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I dedicated you, a prophet to the nations I appointed you. "Ah, Lord God!" I said, "I know not how to speak; I am too young." But the Lord answered me, Say not, "I am too young." To whomever I send you, you shall go; whatever I command you, you shall speak. Have no fear before them, because I am with you to deliver you, says the Lord. Then the Lord extended his hand and touched my mouth, saying, See, I place my words in your mouth! This day I set you over nations and over kingdoms, To root up and to tear down, to destroy and to demolish, to build and to plant (Jer 1,5-10).*

The Messiah comes onto our earth. It urges that hearts be prepared to him. God comes down on our land, chooses a family without life in it and for it he creates the man who must go on proclaiming the presence of the Saviour and inviting all to conversion so that you he can be accepted with dignity. He will be a special man, because the Holy Spirit will fill him from the womb of the mother. Not even a moment he must be without the motion and the guidance of the Spirit of the Lord. He must be all of God. Never must he belong to himself. He must be the body through which the Holy Spirit speaks, works and acts.

*In the days of Herod, King of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah of the priestly division of Abijah; his wife was from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. Both were righteous in the eyes of God, observing all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blamelessly. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren and both were advanced in years. Once when he was serving as priest in his division's turn before God, according to the practice of the priestly service, he was chosen by lot to enter the sanctuary of the Lord to burn incense. Then, when the whole assembly of the people was praying outside at the hour of the incense offering, the angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right of the altar of incense. Zechariah was troubled by what he saw, and fear came upon him. But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, because your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall name him John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the sight of (the) Lord. He will drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will be filled with the holy Spirit even from his mother's womb, and he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God.*

*He will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah to turn the hearts of fathers toward children and the disobedient to the understanding of the righteous, to prepare a people fit for the Lord." Then Zechariah said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years." And the angel said to him in reply, "I am Gabriel, who stand before God. I was sent to speak to you and to announce to you this good news. But now you will be speechless and unable to talk until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled at their proper time." Meanwhile the people were waiting for Zechariah and were amazed that he stayed so long in the sanctuary. But when he came out, he was unable to speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the sanctuary. He was gesturing to them but remained mute. Then, when his days of ministry were completed, he went home. After this time his wife Elizabeth conceived, and she went into seclusion for five months, saying, "So has the Lord done for me at a time when he has seen fit to take away my disgrace before others."*

For Zechariah what the Angel is revealing him is too big to be believed. He doubts and for that he will remain mute until the day of the fulfilment of every word heard. The muteness of Zechariah is of great significance in the history of salvation. It reveals that without faith you cannot sing the marvellous works of the Lord.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints make us singers of God's works.

### You have found favour with God

### Is 7,10-14; Ps 23,1-6; Lk 1,26-38

### 20 DECEMBER

When doe a man find favour with God? When God finds himself, his good, his love, his truth, his justice and his holiness in him. God sees himself in the man and seeing he loves himself, loving the person who reflects him like a mirror. In the Old Testament this expression often recurs. In the New it is said only for the Virgin Mary. Only of her it is said that she has found favour with God.

*Sir, if I may ask you this favour, please do not go on past your servant (Gen 18, 3). When the time approached for Israel to die, he called his son Joseph and said to him: "If you really wish to please me, put your hand under my thigh as a sign of your constant loyalty to me; do not let me be buried in Egypt (Gen 47, 29). Moses said to the Lord, "You, indeed, are telling me to lead this people on; but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. Yet you have said, 'You are my intimate friend,' and also, 'You have found favour with me' (Ex 33, 12). Now, if I have found favour with you, do let me know your ways so that, in knowing you, I may continue to find favour with you. Then, too, this nation is, after all, your own people" (Ex 33, 13). Then he said, "If I find favor with you, O Lord, do come along in our company. This is indeed a stiff-necked people; yet pardon our wickedness and sins, and receive us as your own" (Ex 34, 9). Casting herself prostrate upon the ground, she said to him, "Why should I, a foreigner, be favoured with your notice?" (Rt 2, 10). "If it please the king, and if your servant is deserving of your favour, send me to Judah, to the city of my ancestors' graves, to rebuild it" (Ne 2, 5). If I have found favour with the king and if it pleases your majesty to grant my petition and honour my request, come with Haman tomorrow to a banquet which I shall prepare for you; and then I will do as you ask" (Esth 5, 8). The people that escaped the sword have found favour in the desert. As Israel comes forward to be given his rest (Ger 31, 2). Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God (Lk 1, 30).*

In the Virgin Mary God does not find something of himself, he finds himself entirely in the power of grace, truth, holiness, justice, peace and communion. All of God is totally in her. She is a true temple, she is the living temple of her Lord. The God that lives in Her, that is all in her, now asks for a grace to the One whom he has filled with every grace. He asks her for the grace of being the Mother of his Son, of his eternal Son. Might the Virgin Mary say no to Him of whom she is already the temple. If he wants her body, her body is his. She is only her faithful servant. As God has already occupied all of her soul and her spirit, so now he can occupy all of her body. It is given him thoroughly for eternity.

*In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming to her, he said, "Hail, favoured one! The Lord is with you." But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." But Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?" And the angel said to her in reply, "The holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; for nothing will be impossible for God." Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.*

The Virgin Mary was thought from eternity by God to be wholly and entirely his in soul, in spirit and in body. God took all of her heart and mind, desires and aspirations. Only the will has left all in her hands, so that She were the one to give herself to her God. Mary has found favour with God. But Mary also sees all of herself in God. Even God finds favour in her eyes. It is in this being in each the other and the other in one, in this most pure exchange of life that Mary becomes a gift to God forever. She is from God, She is in God. Now she chooses to be for Him. She is made her servant.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints make us true servants of the Lord.

**DECEMBER 2016**

## THIRD DECADE OF DECEMBER

### Mary set out and travelled to the hill country in haste

### Song 2,8-14; op. Soph 3,14-17; Ps 32,2-3.11-12.20-21; Lk 1,39-45

### 21 DECEMBER

Declaring herself *"The servant of the Lord"*, the Virgin Mary renounces to her rationality, her thoughts, her wisdom, intelligence and her every wish. What Jesus says to those who wish to follow him, applies infinitely more to his mother. If she is of the Lord, she might never be of herself, from herself, for herself, either to pursue her thoughts, her desires, her will or to cure her personal interests.

*As they were proceeding on their journey someone said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus answered him, "Foxes have dens and birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to rest his head." And to another he said, "Follow me." But he replied, "(Lord,) let me go first and bury my father." But he answered him, "Let the dead bury their dead. But you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God." And another said, "I will follow you, Lord, but first let me say farewell to my family at home." (To him) Jesus said, "No one who sets a hand to the plow and looks to what was left behind is fit for the kingdom of God" (Lk 9,57-62).*

The Virgin Mary does not go to the house of Elizabeth for reasons of human convenience. She goes there brought by the Holy Spirit, moved by Him. Why does the Spirit of the Lord move her? Because Mary must bring Him and He will have to descend on Elizabeth and fill the young child who is in her womb of himself. The Holy Spirit brings Mary and Mary carries the Holy Spirit. Mary anticipates in her person the acting of God in the New Covenant. Christ is brought by the Holy Spirit to bring the Holy Spirit into the hearts. Christ is brought by the Spirit of God onto the Cross so that from his body pierced and ripped the Spirit is poured on all of humanity for its resurrection to new life.

Christ Jesus brought by the Spirit generates from his torn, opened side, the Spirit, he blows him upon the disciples for from this moment on they, brought by the Spirit, carry the Spirit into the world so that through them He can be alighted on each heart and be flooded with the grace of conversion first and then in the sacraments be turned into a new creature. In the New Covenant the Christian is the brought by the Spirit and the one that bears Him. For this to happen, like Mary, every disciple of Jesus must be full of grace and declare himself a true servant of God, all delivered to his will.

*During those days Mary set out and travelled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, "Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."*

 The Christian must be concerned about one thing: be filled with the Holy Spirit every day. He is like an empty jar. Every day he must let himself be seized by the Spirit and be filled with Him. Filled with the Spirit he must let himself be moved in order to reach out to those hearts that the Spirit wants them to be filled with Him. Now it is the son of Elizabeth that must be filled with the Holy Spirit. It is Elizabeth the one who must know the mystery of the redemption which is being accomplished through Mary and to which she was called upon to cooperate by becoming the mother of the precursor. Today, the Spirit must be in this house, but he has to be brought there by the Mother of the Lord.

The Virgin Mary is constituted by the Holy Spirit the image to whom every disciple of Jesus must always be inspired by. For him, the Spirit accomplishes his work of redemption and salvation. If he is in the hands of the Spirit, the Spirit will be in his hands, salvation will be fulfilled. If he is not in the hands of the Spirit not even the Spirit will be in his hands and no salvation might ever be accomplished. Mary teaches us, reveals to us that you can be in the hands of the Spirit and the Spirit in our hands. It suffices want to be really, truly *"The servants of the Lord."* Mary is the handmaid of the Lord. Salvation is accomplished. Christ the Servant of the Lord. The Redemption is accomplished. Is the Christian the servant of the Lord?

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints make us true servants of the Lord.

### For he has looked upon his handmaid's lowliness

### 1 Sam 1,24-28; Ps 1 Sam 2,1.4-8; Lk 1,46-55

### 22 DECEMBER

God is all in the Virgin Mary. She knows, by supernatural science, of Holy Spirit, that by herself, for herself it is the absolute nothingness. She did not make herself full of grace. She did not embellish herself with every virtue. She did not fill herself with God. She did not fill herself with the Holy Spirit. Whatever she is, she is by a most pure gift of the Almighty, of her God and her Lord. It is the Almighty who wanted her this way. It is He who has made her great. It is always he who chose her as the Mother of his Only Eternal Son. This is the great humility that God sees in Mary. She appropriates herself of nothing, not even of her response to her God.

If she answered, if she declared herself his servant it is not her merit. It is only by grace. She is a gift from God because God made her a gift for Him. If God had not made her a gift for him, never could have she been made a gift. From the first moment of her conception in Her all is by a gift. Even the gift of her will to God was possible because God has made Her will a very pure gift for her Lord. If God had not made Mary the perfect gift, all delivered to him, she certainly would have never become this full gift, total gift in the hands of her Lord. Never would have she been her perfect servant.

The Virgin Mary becomes for us all true teacher of spirit. She reveals to us with her life, with the faith with which she sees herself, that if we want to be a gift for the Lord the Lord alone is the one that can make us a gift for him. He makes us and we are. He creates us and we will deliver ourselves to him. He makes us what he wants us to make for Him and we make it. We make it because He has made us to fulfil and realize his of own particular, special wishes, one of his current plans of salvation in the midst of our brothers. Even this vision of faith must be created in us by the Lord, otherwise we will see ourselves out of Him, without Him, we shall see ourselves from us and not from the Holy Spirit.

An example will help us understand. A mechanical engineer needs a particular object - a racing car, a supersonic jet, a submarine, a missile, spacecraft and an artificial satellite - he designs, realizes and uses it. The object did nothing to be what it is. If it flies it is because the engineer has made it suitable for flight. If it submerges into the depths it is because he built it with such characteristics. Might ever the object designed and built by him say to have any merit? No. It is from its author. So it is with the Virgin Mary. She is all from her God in her body, in her soul, in her thoughts. If her will says yes, it is because God has made her a will completely directed towards him. Great is the mystery of the Mother of Jesus. No creature was so perfect, no one so docile in his hands.

*And Mary said: "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my saviour. For he has looked upon his handmaid's lowliness; behold, from now on will all ages call me blessed. The Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is from age to age to those who fear him. He has shown might with his arm, dispersed the arrogant of mind and heart. He has thrown down the rulers from their thrones but lifted up the lowly. The hungry he has filled with good things; the rich he has sent away empty. He has helped Israel his servant, remembering his mercy, according to his promise to our fathers, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."*

God wants to build every man on the model of the Virgin Mary. To do this he needs those who day-by-day let themselves be made by Him according to His will. The Virgin Mary lets herself be made by her God Mother of his Son and for this handing over salvation is born on our land. Jesus lets himself be made by the Father in the Holy Spirit, every day from his will and from the Cross redemption pours out for mankind. If like Mary, like Jesus the Lord, the Christian lets himself be made a gift, a total, full gift, by God for Him, then salvation will come onto our land. If everyone takes his life in his hands, in his will and in his desires, nothing happens. The man remains a miserable man and God remains *"a miserable"* God. In the non gift, he can do nothing for the man. He lacks the *"matter"* through which to build tools for his powerful salvation.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints make us gift for our God.

### Immediately his mouth was opened, his tongue freed

### Ml 3,1-4.23-24; Ps 24,4-5.8-10.14; Lk 1,57-66

**23 DECEMBER**

Scripture knows different mutenesses. There exists the muteness fruit of the heart of stone, unable to hear the Word of the Lord. Who does not listen, neither can he relate.

*And he replied: Go and say to this people: Listen carefully, but you shall not understand! Look intently, but you shall know nothing! You are to make the heart of this people sluggish, to dull their ears and close their eyes; Else their eyes will see, their ears hear, their heart understand, and they will turn and be healed (Is 6,9-10).*

Due to the wickedness of the heart of man, Jesus uses the muteness of the parables. These speak to those who must understand, they do not speak to those who must not understand. From the understanding a very serious damage to the kingdom could arise.

*The disciples approached him and said, "Why do you speak to them in parables?" He said to them in reply, "Because knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven has been granted to you, but to them it has not been granted. To anyone who has, more will be given and he will grow rich; from anyone who has not, even what he has will be taken away. This is why I speak to them in parables, because 'they look but do not see and hear but do not listen or understand.' Isaiah's prophecy is fulfilled in them, which says: 'You shall indeed hear but not understand you shall indeed look but never see. Gross is the heart of this people, they will hardly hear with their ears, they have closed their eyes, lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and be converted, and I heal them.' "But blessed are your eyes, because they see, and your ears, because they hear. Amen, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it (Mt 13,10-17).*

There exists also the prophetic muteness. God no longer gives his Word because the people have decided not to listen. This is the most devastating silence. Darkness reigns.

*But then spirit entered into me and set me on my feet, and he spoke with me. He said to me: Go shut yourself up in your house. (As for you, son of man, they will put cords upon you and bind you with them, so that you cannot go out among them.) I will make your tongue stick to your palate so that you will be dumb and unable to rebuke them for being a rebellious house. Only when I speak with you and open your mouth, shall you say to them: Thus says the Lord God! Let him heed who will, and let him resist who will, for they are a rebellious house (Ez 3,22-27). Yes, days are coming, says the Lord God, when I will send famine upon the land: Not a famine of bread, or thirst for water, but for hearing the word of the Lord. Then shall they wander from sea to sea and rove from the north to the east In search of the word of the Lord, but they shall not find it (Am 8,11-12).*

That of Zechariah is a muteness that comes from his doubt, from his not immediate faith. Without faith no work of God might ever be sung and narrated.

*When the time arrived for Elizabeth to have her child she gave birth to a son. Her neighbours and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy toward her, and they rejoiced with her. When they came on the eighth day to circumcise the child, they were going to call him Zechariah after his father, but his mother said in reply, "No. He will be called John." But they answered her, "There is no one among your relatives who has this name." So they made signs, asking his father what he wished him to be called. He asked for a tablet and wrote, "John is his name," and all were amazed. Immediately his mouth was opened, his tongue freed, and he spoke blessing God. Then fear came upon all their neighbours, and all these matters were discussed throughout the hill country of Judea. All who heard these things took them to heart, saying, "What, then, will this child be?" For surely the hand of the Lord was with him.*

Today the Christian lives a muteness due to the falsehoods and heresies that besmirch his mind, his heart and his thoughts. Instead of the truth all falsehood on God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Church, the Sacraments, mercy, justice and the just judgment of God flow from our mouth like a river in flood. Zechariah began to sing God when all the angel's words were fulfilled. Must we fall into hell to shout the truth of every Word of the Lord?

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints make us now singers of truth.

### A horn for our salvation within the house of David his servant

### 2 Sam 7,1-5.8b-12.14a.16; Ps 88,2-5.27.29; Lk 1,67-79

**24 DECEMBER**

Zechariah proclaims with his singing of true prophecy that the promise made by God to David was fulfilled. The King from the everlasting kingdom came into the world and is already present. Being fulfilled this prophecy on the Messiah every other will be fulfilled. On the King that must come there is not a single Word of God, but a multitude and all will be realized in Him, beginning with Genesis and ending to the last Word about Him in the Old Testament.

*"Now then, speak thus to my servant David, 'The Lord of hosts has this to say: It was I who took you from the pasture and from the care of the flock to be commander of my people Israel. I have been with you wherever you went, and I have destroyed all your enemies before you. And I will make you famous like the great ones of the earth. I will fix a place for my people Israel; I will plant them so that they may dwell in their place without further disturbance. Neither shall the wicked continue to afflict them as they did of old, since the time I first appointed judges over my people Israel. I will give you rest from all your enemies. The Lord also reveals to you that he will establish a house for you. And when your time comes and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your heir after you, sprung from your loins, and I will make his kingdom firm. It is he who shall build a house for my name. And I will make his royal throne firm forever. I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me. And if he does wrong, I will correct him with the rod of men and with human chastisements; but I will not withdraw my favour from him as I withdrew it from your predecessor Saul, whom I removed from my presence. Your house and your kingdom shall endure forever before me; your throne shall stand firm forever.'" Nathan reported all these words and this entire vision to David (2Sam 7,8-17).*

Christ Jesus is a complex and infinity mystery. We can attest that every Old Testament Word speaks of God. He is the "filigree" of every Word of Scripture. He must be the " filigree " of every Word of the Church and of every Word of the Christian. Every word that does not contain him, does not speak of Him, does not imply Him and does not refer to him, is not the word of truth, salvation, redemption and justification. If He, the Christ is the eternal Word of the Father, "His Perfect Speech", his "Eternal Logos Incarnate, Crucified, Risen, Ascended into Heaven, Judge of the living and the dead and the Lord of the universe", may we think of being able to say a word without his, against his, excluding his? When this happens, ours is no longer the word of salvation. It is a human word that does not produce any fruit of eternal life. Whenever it is not false and of death, anyway it is vain. It does not open the heart to true hope. It misses the " filigree " of truth.

*Then Zechariah his father, filled with the holy Spirit, prophesied, saying: "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, for he has visited and brought redemption to his people. He has raised up a horn for our salvation within the house of David his servant, even as he promised through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old: salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us, to show mercy to our fathers and to be mindful of his holy covenant and of the oath he swore to Abraham our father, and to grant us that, rescued from the hand of enemies, without fear we might worship him in holiness and righteousness before him all our days. And you, child, will be called prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give his people knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God by which the daybreak from on high will visit us to shine on those who sit in darkness and death's shadow, to guide our feet into the path of peace."*

 The Messiah is the eternal mercy of the Lord our God. We welcomes him, we become the mercy of God in Him, we are transformed into God's mercy for the world. But what exactly is the mercy of God given to us all in Christ, or rather what is Christ the Father's mercy given to us so that we become in Him mercy for the world? Christ is Mercy because he is the Innocent, Pure Lamb, without stain, he offered himself for the atonement and forgiveness of our sin. By accepting Christ, the Christian by Christ is freed from sin and he also in Christ can offer himself to the Father for the salvation of his brothers. This is the great mystery of mercy: living without sin to be made a victim before God for the atonement of the sins of the world. However, if the Christian remains in sin, never might he become mercy to his brothers. First he must become one with the holiness of Christ and then in Christ he will become mercy.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints make us mercy in Christ.

### And the Word became flesh

### Is 52,7-10; Ps 97,1-6; Heb 1,1-6; Jn 1,1-18

### 25 DECEMBER – CHRISTMAS OF THE LORD

The Prologue of the Apostle John has the great merit of having given full light, full truth and perfect revelation to each light, truth and revelation of Christ the Lord contained both in the Old and New Testament. This text must be thought, read, meditated, taken, studied, considered and loved, like the hermeneutic principle for understanding the mystery of all the prophecies, all the oracles and all the words spoken about Him. This text puts an end to every discussion. For example, if the Book of Proverbs and that of Sirach can insinuate some thought not perfectly corresponding to the eternal reality of the Word, with Giovanni everything disappears.

*"The Lord begot me, the first-born of his ways, the forerunner of his prodigies of long ago; From of old I was poured forth, at the first, before the earth. When there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no fountains or springs of water; Before the mountains were settled into place, before the hills, I was brought forth; While as yet the earth and the fields were not made, nor the first clods of the world. "When he established the heavens I was there, when he marked out the vault over the face of the deep; When he made firm the skies above, when he fixed fast the foundations of the earth; When he set for the sea its limit, so that the waters should not transgress his command; Then was I beside him as his craftsman, and I was his delight day by day, Playing before him all the while, playing on the surface of his earth; and I found delight in the sons of men (Pr 8,22-31).*

*Wisdom sings her own praises, before her own people she proclaims her glory; In the assembly of the Most High she opens her mouth, in the presence of his hosts she declares her worth: "From the mouth of the Most High I came forth, and mist like covered the earth. In the highest heavens did I dwell, my throne on a pillar of cloud. The vault of heaven I compassed alone, through the deep abyss I wandered. Over waves of the sea, over all the land, over every people and nation I held sway. Among all these I sought a resting place; in whose inheritance should I abide? "Then the Creator of all gave me his command, and he who formed me chose the spot for my tent, Saying, 'In Jacob make your dwelling, in Israel your inheritance.' Before all ages, in the beginning, he created me, and through all ages I shall not cease to be. In the holy tent I ministered before him, and in Zion I fixed my abode. Thus in the chosen city he has given me rest, in Jerusalem is my domain. I have struck root among the glorious people, in the portion of the Lord, his heritage (Sir 24,1-12).*

The Prologue of John's Gospel starts from eternity and enters time. It speaks of time from the eternity made flesh, but that perpetually remains in the bosom of the Father. Christ is the One that lives in time and eternity. He speaks at the time from eternity. He speaks to eternity from time. With the Incarnation of the Word the *"ontological"* structure of God and man changes. The truth of Jesus is in this fundamental change. It is this essential change that forever separates Christ from every other.

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. What came to be through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race; the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. A man named John was sent from God. He came for testimony, to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came to be through him, but the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, but his own people did not accept him. But to those who did accept him he gave power to become children of God, to those who believe in his name, who were born not by natural generation nor by human choice nor by a man's decision but of God. And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth. John testified to him and cried out, saying, "This was he of whom I said, 'The one who is coming after me ranks ahead of me because he existed before me.'" From his fullness we have all received, grace in place of grace, because while the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. The only Son, God, who is at the Father's side, has revealed him.*

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints make us enjoy the novelty of Jesus.

### But whoever endures to the end will be saved

### At 6,8-10.12; 7,54-60; Ps 30,3-4.6.8a.16-17; Mt 10,17-22

**26 DECEMBER**

Christianity is not a noble morality, it is not compliance with a very high law, it is not defence of non-negotiable principles, it is not obedience to the commandments written on stone tablets to certify their immutability. Christianity is in these things, but it is not these things. What then is Christianity? Or rather, who is a Christian? Christian is one who is called to share a life, rather more than to share it, to make it present, to manifest it possible in every field and place, in every historical moment, in any condition the man is in, operates, acts, is in relationship , lives, stays and dwells. That is how this life is presented to us by the Apostle Paul.

*Only, conduct yourselves in a way worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear news of you, that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind struggling together for the faith of the gospel, not intimidated in any way by your opponents. This is proof to them of destruction, but of your salvation. And this is God's doing. For to you has been granted, for the sake of Christ, not only to believe in him but also to suffer for him. Yours is the same struggle as you saw in me and now hear about me.  If there is any encouragement in Christ, any solace in love, any participation in the Spirit, any compassion and mercy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, with the same love, united in heart, thinking one thing. Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vainglory; rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourselves, each looking out not for his own interests, but (also) everyone for those of others.*

*Have among yourselves the same attitude that is also yours in Christ Jesus, Who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross. Because of this, God greatly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. So then, my beloved, obedient as you have always been, not only when I am present but all the more now when I am absent, work out your salvation with fear and trembling. For God is the one who, for his good purpose, works in you both to desire and to work. Do everything without grumbling or questioning, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine like lights in the world, as you hold on to the word of life, so that my boast for the day of Christ may be that I did not run in vain or labour in vain. But, even if I am poured out as a libation upon the sacrificial service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with all of you. In the same way you also should rejoice and share your joy with me (Phil 1,27-2,18).*

The life that we are called to share is that of Jesus Crucified. It is a life offered as a burnt offering to the heavenly Father so that He can make of it a redemptive sacrifice for the world. The nails and the cross are like the knife and the wood that served for the sacrifices of the old law. The martyrdom nails fix us at the wood so our sacrifice is perfect. This is perseverance: remaining nailed on the wood of the sacrifice because our whole body will not be consumed. Jesus let himself be nailed on the wood of his holocaust and only after having said: *"consummatum est"*, let himself be unnailed.

*But beware of people, for they will hand you over to courts and scourge you in their synagogues, and you will be led before governors and kings for my sake as a witness before them and the pagans. When they hand you over, do not worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say. You will be given at that moment what you are to say. For it will not be you who speak but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. Brother will hand over brother to death, and the father his child; children will rise up against parents and have them put to death. You will be hated by all because of my name, but whoever endures to the end will be saved.*

Sharing the life of Jesus must be in everything: in obedience, in holiness, in the mission, in truth, in justice, in peace, in mercy, in love and in cross. After death it will be sharing in the glorious resurrection. One life: on earth and in heaven, the only life and the only death of Christ in us.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints make us one life with Christ.

### The other disciple ran faster than Peter

### 1 Jn 1,1-4; Ps 96,1-2.5-6.11-12; Jn 20,2-8

**27 DECEMBER**

St. Paul uses the race image to say to the disciples of Jesus that they must never stop running behind Christ, in order to reach Him. Christ is always before us, never behind, never close, never achieved and always to be reached. Not even in eternity we will reach him. He is infinite by divinity, we are finite by humanity.

 *(But) whatever gains I had, these I have come to consider a loss because of Christ. More than that, I even consider everything as a loss because of the supreme good of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have accepted the loss of all things and I consider them so much rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having any righteousness of my own based on the law but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God, depending on faith to know him and the power of his resurrection and (the) sharing of his sufferings by being conformed to his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead. It is not that I have already taken hold of it or have already attained perfect maturity, but I continue my pursuit in hope that I may possess it, since I have indeed been taken possession of by Christ (Jesus). Brothers, I for my part do not consider myself to have taken possession. Just one thing: forgetting what lies behind but straining forward to what lies ahead, I continue my pursuit toward the goal, the prize of God's upward calling, in Christ Jesus (Cf. Phil 3,1-14).*

In the Second Letter to Timothy he affirms of having finished the race on earth. What he was asked, he did it with purity of conscience, without sparing himself in anything.

*I am already being poured on offer and it is now time for me to leave this life. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now I just have the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day; not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing (Gal 4.6 to 8).*

In the letter to the Galatians he rebukes the disciples of that community for having stopped the race behind Christ in order to chase human things that give no salvation.

*For freedom Christ set us free; so stand firm and do not submit again to the yoke of slavery. It is I, Paul, who am telling you that if you have yourselves circumcised, Christ will be of no benefit to you. Once again I declare to every man who has himself circumcised that he is bound to observe the entire law. You are separated from Christ, you who are trying to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace. For through the Spirit, by faith, we await the hope of righteousness. For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love. You were running well; who hindered you from following (the) truth? That enticement does not come from the one who called you. A little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough. I am confident of you in the Lord that you will not take a different view, and that the one who is troubling you will bear the condemnation, whoever he may be. As for me, brothers, if I am still preaching circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case, the stumbling block of the cross has been abolished. Would that those who are upsetting you might also castrate themselves! (Gal 5,1-11).*

Peter and John run. John stops at the faith that comes from the signs of an empty tomb and from a new understanding of the words of Scripture. He does not run. It is Christ who runs after him and always enriches him with new revelations.

*So she ran and went to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and told them, "They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they put him." So Peter and the other disciple went out and came to the tomb. They both ran, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and arrived at the tomb first; he bent down and saw the burial cloths there, but did not go in. When Simon Peter arrived after him, he went into the tomb and saw the burial cloths there, and the cloth that had covered his head, not with the burial cloths but rolled up in a separate place. Then the other disciple also went in, the one who had arrived at the tomb first, and he saw and believed.*

For John, Jesus is the one who always returns. He waits for him, knowing that certainly he will come and will add what is lacking to the fullness of truth. In fact, in his Gospel, Jesus is presented as the friend, the confidant that is manifested to the friend.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints make us true friends of Jesus.

### Rachel weeping for her children

### 1 Jn 1,5-2,2; Ps 123,2-5.7-8; Mt 2,13-18

### 28 DECEMBER

The Evangelist Matthew, reading the killing of children of Bethlehem on the principle of the prophecy of Jeremiah, wants to create hope in the hearts. Death is not the end. The children will be returned to the mothers, but shining with eternal glory, in the same way that Jesus as God will be given to the mother after the immolation on Golgotha coated in light, indeed turned into light. She gave Christ to the Father in a body of flesh, liable and mortal. The Lord gives her son back to her in a body of spirit, light, immortal, impassive, spiritual and incorruptible, no longer subject to suffering.

*Hear the word of the Lord, O nations, proclaim it on distant coasts, and say: He who scattered Israel, now gathers them together, he guards them as a shepherd his flock. The Lord shall ransom Jacob, he shall redeem him from the hand of his conqueror. Shouting, they shall mount the heights of Zion, they shall come streaming to the Lord’s blessings: The grain, the wine, and the oil, the sheep and the oxen; They themselves shall be like watered gardens, never again shall they languish. Then the virgins shall make merry and dance, and young men and old as well. I will turn their mourning into joy, I will console and gladden them after their sorrows. I will lavish choice portions upon the priests, and my people shall be filled with my blessings, says the Lord. Thus says the Lord: In Ramah is heard the sound of moaning, of bitter weeping! Rachel mourns her children, she refuses to be consoled because her children are no more.*

*Thus says the Lord: Cease your cries of mourning, wipe the tears from your eyes. The sorrow you have shown shall have its reward, says the Lord, they shall return from the enemy's land. There is hope for your future, says the Lord; your sons shall return to their own borders. I hear, I hear Ephraim pleading: You chastised me, and I am chastened; I was an untamed calf. If you allow me, I will return, for you are the Lord, my God. I turn in repentance; I have come to myself, I strike my breast; I blush with shame, I bear the disgrace of my youth. Is Ephraim not my favoured son, the child in whom I delight? Often as I threaten him, I still remember him with favour; My heart stirs for him, I must show him mercy, says the Lord. Set up road markers, put up guideposts; Turn your attention to the highway, the road by which you went. Turn back, O virgin Israel, turn back to these your cities. How long will you continue to stray, rebellious daughter? The Lord has created a new thing upon the earth: the woman must encompass the man with devotion (Jer 31,10-22).*

It is the hope of the glorious resurrection that transforms our bodies into light, the force that must drive every believer in Christ to persevere to the end till martyrdom. Then who are the children of Bethlehem? They are a figure, an image of every future disciple of Jesus. Even for them the fierce Herod will come and will remove them from the land of the living, will uproot them as you uproot a tree from the ground and you place it to dry with the roots exposed to the sun. But this is not the end of the disciple of Jesus. The Lord will take this uprooted tree and will plant it in his eternal garden. A divine hope!

*When they had departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you. Herod is going to search for the child to destroy him." Joseph rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed for Egypt. He stayed there until the death of Herod, that what the Lord had said through the prophet might be fulfilled, "Out of Egypt I called my son." When Herod realized that he had been deceived by the magi, he became furious. He ordered the massacre of all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had ascertained from the magi. Then was fulfilled what had been said through Jeremiah the prophet: "A voice was heard in Ramah, sobbing and loud lamentation; Rachel weeping for her children, and she would not be consoled, since they were no more."*

The children of Bethlehem did not die in the place of Christ, they died in Christ, that is why they are the first martyrs, even if unconscious. But also the death of a Christian is not for Christ, it is in Christ. By becoming a Christian, one shares in the life of Christ, participating in Him of his death and resurrection. In Christ we die, in Christ we rise. In Christ, God plants us in his Paradise. In Christ, we are transformed into light and spirit. As Christ's death is ours, so his eternal glory is ours.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints make us life of the life of Christ.

### My eyes have seen your salvation

### 1 Jn 2,3-11; Ps 95,1-3.6; Lk 2,22-35

### 29 DECEMBER

I do not think that in the Old Testament there was a more portentous salvation than the one wrought by the Lord at the Red Sea. Moses sings a song that will remain indelible throughout the history of Israel. Yet that was a salvation, it was not salvation. Not even the crossing of the desert with all the wonders that accompanied it was salvation. They were a salvation aimed at preparing the true salvation of our God.

*Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the Lord: I will sing to the Lord, for he is gloriously triumphant; horse and chariot he has cast into the sea. My strength and my courage is the Lord, and he has been my saviour. He is my God, I praise him; the God of my father, I extol him. The Lord is a warrior, Lord is his name! Pharaoh's chariots and army he hurled into the sea; the elite of his officers were submerged in the Red Sea. The flood waters covered them, they sank into the depths like a stone. Your right hand, O Lord, magnificent in power, your right hand, O Lord, has shattered the enemy. In your great majesty you overthrew your adversaries; you loosed your wrath to consume them like stubble. At a breath of your anger the waters piled up, the flowing waters stood like a mound, the flood waters congealed in the midst of the sea. The enemy boasted, "I will pursue and overtake them; I will divide the spoils and have my fill of them; I will draw my sword; my hand shall despoil them!" When your wind blew, the sea covered them; like lead they sank in the mighty waters. Who is like to you among the gods, O Lord? Who is like to you, magnificent in holiness?*

*O terrible in renown, worker of wonders, when you stretched out your right hand, the earth swallowed them! In your mercy you led the people you redeemed; in your strength you guided them to your holy dwelling. The nations heard and quaked; anguish gripped the dwellers in Philistia. Then were the princes of Edom dismayed; trembling seized the chieftains of Moab; All the dwellers in Canaan melted away; terror and dread fell upon them. By the might of your arm they were frozen like stone, while your people, O Lord, passed over, while the people you had made your own passed over. And you brought them in and planted them on the mountain of your inheritance -  the place where you made your seat, O Lord, the sanctuary, O Lord, which your hands established. The Lord shall reign forever and ever. They sang thus because Pharaoh's horses and chariots and charioteers had gone into the sea, and the Lord made the waters of the sea flow back upon them, though the Israelites had marched on dry land through the midst of the sea. The prophetess Miriam, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine in her hand, while all the women went out after her with tambourines, dancing; and she led them in the refrain: Sing to the Lord, for he is gloriously triumphant; horse and chariot he has cast into the sea (Ex 15,1-21).*

Simeon does not see the sea open, he does not see manna rain from heaven, he does not even see miracles. He sees only a child that was presented to the temple. In this child he sees salvation, the light and the glory of Israel. He sees the fulfilment of all prophecies.

*When the days were completed for their purification according to the law of Moses, they took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, just as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every male that opens the womb shall be consecrated to the Lord," and to offer the sacrifice of "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons," in accordance with the dictate in the law of the Lord. Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. This man was righteous and devout, awaiting the consolation of Israel, and the holy Spirit was upon him. It had been revealed to him by the holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Messiah of the Lord. He came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to perform the custom of the law in regard to him, he took him into his arms and blessed God, saying: "Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you prepared in sight of all the peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel." The child's father and mother were amazed at what was said about him; and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted (and you yourself a sword will pierce) so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."*

This is the great grace that the Lord gives to this man: seeing in littleness, in the human *"nothing",* in the nothing of history, the supernatural salvation. To Simeon the sea that opens and closes is not the miracle of God. Instead, it is the heart of this child that will be cut open to make gush without interruption the Spirit of the new creation.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints make us contemplators of Christ.

### What had been spoken through the prophets

### Sir 3,2-6.12-14 [NV 3,3-7.14-17a]; Ps 127,1-5; Col 3,12-21; Mt 2,13-15.19-23

### 30 DECEMBER

The Evangelist Matthew in just two chapters of his Gospel has revealed to us that Jesus is the blessing of Abraham, is the King of the eternal kingdom that is born in Bethlehem and the true Son of God; that Mary of Nazareth is the Virgin who conceives. Today he reveals us that two more prophecies are accomplished in Him: he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, will be the one who will atone for our sins by taking them all upon himself. The presentation of Christ is almost perfect.

*But a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a bud shall blossom. The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him: a spirit of wisdom and of understanding, A spirit of counsel and of strength, a spirit of knowledge and of fear of the Lord, and his delight shall be the fear of the Lord. Not by appearance shall he judge, nor by hearsay shall he decide, But he shall judge the poor with justice, and decide aright for the land's afflicted. He shall strike the ruthless with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked. Justice shall be the band around his waist, and faithfulness a belt upon his hips. Then the wolf shall be a guest of the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; The calf and the young lion shall browse together, with a little child to guide them. The cow and the bear shall be neighbours, together their young shall rest; the lion shall eat hay like the ox. The baby shall play by the cobra's den, and the child lay his hand on the adder's lair. There shall be no harm or ruin on all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be filled with knowledge of the Lord, as water covers the sea. On that day, The root of Jesse, set up as a signal for the nations, The Gentiles shall seek out, for his dwelling shall be glorious (Is 11,1-10).*

*Who would believe what we have heard? To whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? He grew up like a sapling before him, like a shoot from the parched earth; There was in him no stately bearing to make us look at him, nor appearance that would attract us to him. He was spurned and avoided by men, a man of suffering, accustomed to infirmity, One of those from whom men hide their faces, spurned, and we held him in no esteem. Yet it was our infirmities that he bore, our sufferings that he endured, While we thought of him as stricken, as one smitten by God and afflicted. But he was pierced for our offenses, crushed for our sins, Upon him was the chastisement that makes us whole, by his stripes we were healed. We had all gone astray like sheep, each following his own way; But the Lord laid upon him the guilt of us all. Though he was harshly treated, he submitted and opened not his mouth; Like a lamb led to the slaughter or a sheep before the shearers, he was silent and opened not his mouth. Oppressed and condemned, he was taken away, and who would have thought any more of his destiny? When he was cut off from the land of the living, and smitten for the sin of his people, A grave was assigned him among the wicked and a burial place with evildoers, Though he had done no wrong nor spoken any falsehood. (But the Lord was pleased to crush him in infirmity.) If he gives his life as an offering for sin, he shall see his descendants in a long life, and the will of the Lord shall be accomplished through him. Because of his affliction he shall see the light in fullness of days; Through his suffering, my servant shall justify many, and their guilt he shall bear. Therefore I will give him his portion among the great, and he shall divide the spoils with the mighty, Because he surrendered himself to death and was counted among the wicked; And he shall take away the sins of many, and win pardon for their offenses (Is 53,1-12).*

Nazarene, Shoot, filled with the Holy Spirit, so rich in mercy to atone in his body all the sins of mankind. This is the truth of Jesus. The history will confirm it. Every event and circumstance is always read by the Evangelist in the key of prophecy.

*When they had departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you. Herod is going to search for the child to destroy him." Joseph rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed for Egypt. He stayed there until the death of Herod, that what the Lord had said through the prophet might be fulfilled, "Out of Egypt I called my son." When Herod had died, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead." He rose, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go back there. And because he had been warned in a dream, he departed for the region of Galilee. He went and dwelt in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, "He shall be called a Nazorean."*

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints, give us the knowledge of Christ Jesus.

### The law was given through Moses

### 1 Jn 2,18-21; Ps 95,1-2.11-13; Jn 1,1-18

### 31 DECEMBER

The Letter to the Hebrews with a wonderful argument shows us what the difference between Moses and Christ is. Christ Jesus is the house. Moses is a servant of the house. It also reveals us what the exact meaning of the phrase is: *"grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."* Christ is the truth and the life of God in our land, in the midst of men. Through faith, we were made partakers of Christ. We are part of him, part of his truth, part of his life, part of his sanctity, part of his mercy and part of his obedience. We are part in Him, with Him, for Him. We are also part through whom every other man will have to become a participant of the Lord Jesus.

*In times past, God spoke in partial and various ways to our ancestors through the prophets; in these last days, he spoke to us through a son, whom he made heir of all things and through whom he created the universe, who is the refulgence of his glory, the very imprint of his being, and who sustains all things by his mighty word. When he had accomplished purification from sins, he took his seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high, as far superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs (Heb 1,1-4).*

*Therefore, holy "brothers," sharing in a heavenly calling, reflect on Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession, who was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was "faithful in (all) his house." But he is worthy of more "glory" than Moses, as the founder of a house has more "honour" than the house itself. Every house is founded by someone, but the founder of all is God. Moses was "faithful in all his house" as a "servant" to testify to what would be spoken, but Christ was faithful as a son placed over his house. We are his house, if (only) we hold fast to our confidence and pride in our hope. Therefore, as the holy Spirit says: "Oh, that today you would hear his voice, 'Harden not your hearts as at the rebellion in the day of testing in the desert, where your ancestors tested and tried me and saw my works for forty years. Because of this I was provoked with that generation and I said, "They have always been of erring heart, and they do not know my ways." As I swore in my wrath, "They shall not enter into my rest."'" Take care, brothers, that none of you may have an evil and unfaithful heart, so as to forsake the living God. Encourage yourselves daily while it is still "today," so that none of you may grow hardened by the deceit of sin. We have become partners of Christ if only we hold the beginning of the reality firm until the end (Heb 3,1-14).*

This is our heavenly call: being bearers, in our body, of Christ truth and grace, becoming Christ's truth and grace. The Holy Spirit conforms us to Christ, makes us become truth and grace, in Him, truth and grace, bringing him, truth and grace; every day becoming us truth and grace from his truth and grace, we bring it into the world, as He brought it, because this is the end of the Christian mission.

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. What came to be through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race; the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. A man named John was sent from God. He came for testimony, to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came to be through him, but the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, but his own people did not accept him. But to those who did accept him he gave power to become children of God, to those who believe in his name, who were born not by natural generation nor by human choice nor by a man's decision but of God. And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth. John testified to him and cried out, saying, "This was he of whom I said, 'The one who is coming after me ranks ahead of me because he existed before me.'" From his fullness we have all received, grace in place of grace, because while the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. The only Son, God, who is at the Father's side, has revealed him.*

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints make us truth and grace of Christ.