**FEBRUARY 2017**

## FIRST DECADE OF FEBRUARY

### Jesus went around to the villages in the vicinity teaching

### Heb 12,4-7.11-15; Ps 102,1-2.13-14.17-18; Mk 6,1-6.

**1 FEBRUARY**

Jesus does not depend on the faith or unbelief of men. What he does, says, operates, performs, every revelation, instruction, teaching and story always and only come from the will of the Father. He lives of pure obedience to every divine command. What is true of Ezekiel, is much more true for him. By command the prophet speaks, goes, retreats, keeps silent and remains mute. Nothing is from his will. Everything is from God in him.

*Son of man, stand up! I wish to speak with you. As he spoke to me, spirit entered into me and set me on my feet, and I heard the one who was speaking say to me: Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, rebels who have rebelled against me; they and their fathers have revolted against me to this very day. Hard of face and obstinate of heart are they to whom I am sending you. But you shall say to them: Thus says the Lord God! And whether they heed or resist - for they are a rebellious house - they shall know that a prophet has been among them. But as for you, son of man, fear neither them nor their words when they contradict you and reject you, and when you sit on scorpions. Neither fear their words nor be dismayed at their looks, for they are a rebellious house. (But speak my words to them, whether they heed or resist, for they are rebellious.) As for you, son of man, obey me when I speak to you: be not rebellious like this house of rebellion, but open your mouth and eat what I shall give you. It was then I saw a hand stretched out to me, in which was a written scroll which he unrolled before me. It was covered with writing front and back, and written on it was: Lamentation and wailing and woe! (Ez 2,1-10).*

Today, the Heavenly Father wants to reveal to the inhabitants of Nazareth who that man called Jesus who lived in their midst and is one of them, is. He is his Messiah, the one that Realizes his every Word. He is the One that would have given fulfilment to every prophecy. They must know that the Messiah is present in the world and comes just from Nazareth. It is a glory that God wants to offer them. This is the will of the Father. Jesus goes to Nazareth, moved by the Holy Spirit and gives them the revelation that the Father wants to be donated. Now everything is placed in their decision. Whether they believe, of not believe it is no longer in the hands of Jesus, even because the Father has not given him the mission to convince them in the faith. Having paid this mission and attested its truth, also through examples taken from Scripture, just as the Gospel according to Luke reveals us, Jesus gets up and goes to other villages and cities to proclaim them the kingdom of God. Supreme freedom of Jesus!

*He departed from there and came to his native place, accompanied by his disciples. When the Sabbath came he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astonished. They said, "Where did this man get all this? What kind of wisdom has been given him? What mighty deeds are wrought by his hands! Is he not the carpenter, the son of Mary, and the brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him. Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honour except in his native place and among his own kin and in his own house." So he was not able to perform any mighty deed there, apart from curing a few sick people by laying his hands on them. He was amazed at their lack of faith. He went around to the villages in the vicinity teaching.*

Jesus did not come onto our land to seek consensus. Who seeks consensus has to deny the truth of which he is a carrier, announcer and performer. He did not even come to make disciples. Who wants to make disciples, has also to deny the truth of God. Jesus came to reveal the Father in his mystery of love and redemption. He came to proclaim that the whole mystery of the mercy of God is fulfilled in Him. Then the Father will be the one, in his Holy Spirit, to make Christ credible, and always the Father will be the one to give him disciples. But Jesus himself is the Father's gift to humanity. Jesus Christ is not a gift of the Father made the world once and for all. He is a gift that the Father makes to man from time to time. The Father reveals to Christ for whom He must become a gift of revelation and salvation and Christ lets himself be made. The Father sends him to Nazareth in the Holy Spirit, and He goes there. He gives the revelation on his mystery. The gift has been made to them. Now Jesus has to be a gift for others. He leaves Nazareth and goes elsewhere. There are many villages that still have not received the gift of the Father and He has to go there.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints make us a gift in the hands of Jesus.

### According to the law of Moses

### Ml 3,1-4; Ps 23,7-10; Heb 2,14-18; Lk 2,22-40

### 2 FEBRUARY

Imagine that a thousand men scattered around the ground are needed to the Holy Spirit to fulfil his word, his promise and his prophecy. He moves them with divine wisdom, each in his time, so that he is in the place where his word, his promise and his prophecy must be fulfilled and come to life. This requires the greatest obedience, submission, listening to his every motion. Jesus is moved by the Spirit and the Heavenly Father operates with divine greatness his will. Mary and Joseph are also moved by obedience to the Law and the Spirit of the Lord can fulfil all his promises. Obedience is the principle of salvation. What once was said of wisdom that is the principle of all, in the New Testament must be referred to obedience to every prompting of the Spirit of the Lord.

In obedience to the Law Mary and Joseph carry the Baby to the temple to be offered to the Lord. It was offered and redeemed, always in obedience to the Law. In obedience to the prompting of the Holy Spirit the Elder Simeon also presents himself at the temple. The two obediences meet. The prophecy is fulfilled. The promise is realized. Simeon sees the Messiah, he takes him in his arms and cries out to the people present his truth. He is light to illuminate the Gentiles of the purest truth of the Father. He is the glory of his people Israel. He is the sign of contradiction so that the thoughts of many hearts are revealed. Simeon also sees the Mother of Jesus and he prophesies to Her the martyrdom of the soul. Everything happens for obedience to the Law and the Spirit of God.

*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." There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived seven years with her husband after her marriage, and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple, but worshiped night and day with fasting and prayer. And coming forward at that very time, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem. When they had fulfilled all the prescriptions of the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favour of God was upon him.*

Who wants to be an instrument, sacrament, means and way through which the Lord today accomplishes salvation for his every creature is obliged to live the two obediences: obedience to the Law, the Gospel, the Word and obedience to the prompting of the Holy Spirit. However, let no one hope to be able to obey to the prompting of the Spirit of God if he does not obey the Law, the Gospel and the Word. It is obedience to the Word that disposes the heart to the prompting of the Spirit. If the first obedience is nonexistent, the second obedience will also be nonexistent. Without obedience to the Gospel God is put in great difficulty. He cannot operate his redemption at the top of his grace and truth. For the disobedience of many, many people do not come to obedience to the faith.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints, give us the two obediences.

### She had an opportunity one day

### Heb 13,1-8; Ps 26,1.3.5.8b-9; Mk 6,14-29.

**3 FEBRUARY**

We can read the death of John the Baptist in the light of the Psalm. The evil man does not give himself peace, knows how to wait, spy, lie in ambush and hide behind hedges. This is his certainty: the right time, the time of death for the righteous will come.

*Why do You stand afar off, O Lord? Why do You hide Yourself in times of trouble?**In pride the wicked hotly pursue the afflicted; Let them be caught in the plots which they have devised. For the wicked boasts of his heart’s desire, And the greedy man curses and spurns the Lord.**The wicked, in the haughtiness of his countenance, does not seek Him. All his thoughts are, “There is no God.”**His ways prosper at all times; Your judgments are on high, out of his sight; As for all his adversaries, he snorts at them.**He says to himself, “I will not be moved; Throughout all generations I will not be in adversity.”**His mouth is full of curses and deceit and oppression; Under his tongue is mischief and wickedness.**He sits in the lurking places of the villages; In the hiding places he kills the innocent; His eyes stealthily watch for the ]unfortunate.**He lurks in a hiding place as a lion in his lair; He lurks to catch the afflicted; He catches the afflicted when he draws him into his net.**He crouches, he bows down, And the unfortunate fall by his mighty ones.**He says to himself, “God has forgotten; He has hidden His face; He will never see it.”* *Arise, O Lord; O God, lift up Your hand. Do not forget the afflicted.**Why has the wicked spurned God? He has said to himself, “You will not require it.”**You have seen it, for You have beheld mischief and vexation to take it into Your hand. The unfortunate commits himself to You; You have been the helper of the orphan.**Break the arm of the wicked and the evildoer, Seek out his wickedness until You find none.* *The Lord is King forever and ever; Nations have perished from His land.**O Lord, You have heard the desire of the humble; You will strengthen their heart, You will incline Your ear**To vindicate the orphan and the oppressed, So that man who is of the earth will no longer cause terror (Ps 10 (9) 1-18).*

Herodias is an evil woman. She decided that John the Baptist has to die and it must be death. Sooner or later Herod will make a mistake and she will be ready to exploit it to the fullest. She waits for the moment and knowing Herod she knows that it will come.

*King Herod heard about it, for his fame had become widespread, and people were saying, "John the Baptist has been raised from the dead; that is why mighty powers are at work in him." Others were saying, "He is Elijah"; still others, "He is a prophet like any of the prophets." But when Herod learned of it, he said, "It is John whom I beheaded. He has been raised up." Herod was the one who had John arrested and bound in prison on account of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, whom he had married. John had said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." Herodias harboured a grudge against him and wanted to kill him but was unable to do so. Herod feared John, knowing him to be a righteous and holy man, and kept him in custody. When he heard him speak he was very much perplexed, yet he liked to listen to him.*

*She had an opportunity one day when Herod, on his birthday, gave a banquet for his courtiers, his military officers, and the leading men of Galilee. Herodias's own daughter came in and performed a dance that delighted Herod and his guests. The king said to the girl, "Ask of me whatever you wish and I will grant it to you." He even swore (many things) to her, "I will grant you whatever you ask of me, even to half of my kingdom." She went out and said to her mother, "What shall I ask for?" She replied, "The head of John the Baptist." The girl hurried back to the king's presence and made her request, "I want you to give me at once on a platter the head of John the Baptist." The king was deeply distressed, but because of his oaths and the guests he did not wish to break his word to her. So he promptly dispatched an executioner with orders to bring back his head. He went off and beheaded him in the prison. He brought in the head on a platter and gave it to the girl. The girl in turn gave it to her mother. When his disciples heard about it, they came and took his body and laid it in a tomb.*

Every man can lend his mouth, his heart, his mind and his decision to a wicked person so that he realizes his projects of death. The evil man knows that he can count on all and waits with patience and determination. The mistake will come to pass. How to protect us not to pay our work to the fulfilment of the projects of the wicked? There is only one rule: remaining anchored in the Word of the Lord and in his Law. If we leave the law of God, sooner or later we will be accomplices of the wicked, we will lend them the side and they might accomplish any wrongdoing. We are the weapon in their hands.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints, keep us in the Word of Jesus.

### Like sheep without a shepherd

### Heb 13,15-17.20-21; Ps 22,2-6; Mk 6,30-34.

### 4 FEBRUARY

The condition of the sheep without a shepherd is doubly sad. It is sad because the wolf can tear it to pieces at any time. It is also sad because the bully sheep always imposes itself with its arrogance on the weak and sick one. The shepherd has to keep watch so that each sheep can live guarded from wolves on the outside and from overbearingness on the inside.

*Thus the word of the Lord came to me: Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, in these words prophesy to them (to the shepherds): Thus says the Lord God: Woe to the shepherds of Israel who have been pasturing themselves! Should not shepherds, rather, pasture sheep? You have fed off their milk, worn their wool, and slaughtered the fatlings, but the sheep you have not pastured. You did not strengthen the weak nor heal the sick nor bind up the injured. You did not bring back the strayed nor seek the lost, but you lorded it over them harshly and brutally. So they were scattered for lack of a shepherd, and became food for all the wild beasts. My sheep were scattered and wandered over all the mountains and high hills; my sheep were scattered over the whole earth, with no one to look after them or to search for them. Therefore, shepherds, hear the word of the Lord: As I live, says the Lord God, because my sheep have been given over to pillage, and because my sheep have become food for every wild beast, for lack of a shepherd; because my shepherds did not look after my sheep, but pastured themselves and did not pasture my sheep; because of this, shepherds, hear the word of the Lord: Thus says the Lord God: I swear I am coming against these shepherds. I will claim my sheep from them and put a stop to their shepherding my sheep so that they may no longer pasture themselves. I will save my sheep, that they may no longer be food for their mouths. For thus says the Lord God: I myself will look after and tend my sheep.*

*As a shepherd tends his flock when he finds himself among his scattered sheep, so will I tend my sheep. I will rescue them from every place where they were scattered when it was cloudy and dark. I will lead them out from among the peoples and gather them from the foreign lands; I will bring them back to their own country and pasture them upon the mountains of Israel (in the land's ravines and all its inhabited places). In good pastures will I pasture them, and on the mountain heights of Israel shall be their grazing ground. There they shall lie down on good grazing ground, and in rich pastures shall they be pastured on the mountains of Israel. I myself will pasture my sheep; I myself will give them rest, says the Lord God. The lost I will seek out, the strayed I will bring back, the injured I will bind up, the sick I will heal (but the sleek and the strong I will destroy), shepherding them rightly. As for you, my sheep, says the Lord God, I will judge between one sheep and another, between rams and goats. Was it not enough for you to graze on the best pasture, that you had to trample the rest of your pastures with your feet? Was it not enough for you to drink the clearest water, that you had to foul the remainder with your feet? Thus my sheep had to graze on what your feet had trampled and drink what your feet had fouled. Therefore thus says the Lord God: Now will I judge between the fat and the lean sheep. Because you push with side and shoulder, and butt all the weak sheep with your horns until you have driven them out, I will save my sheep so that they may no longer be despoiled, and I will judge between one sheep and another (Ez 34,1-22).*

 Jesus sees his people wander like sheep without a shepherd. He cannot just leave it to itself. He must take care of it. His disciples can rest. He cannot. He has to take care of his father's sheep. He must teach them many things.

*The apostles gathered together with Jesus and reported all they had done and taught. He said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." People were coming and going in great numbers, and they had no opportunity even to eat. So they went off in the boat by themselves to a deserted place. People saw them leaving and many came to know about it. They hastened there on foot from all the towns and arrived at the place before them. When he disembarked and saw the vast crowd, his heart was moved with pity for them, for they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.*

The Apostles need physical rest and the sheep spiritual rest. The needs for spiritual rest are infinitely superior to the needs of the physical rest. Jesus, in the Holy Spirit, always knows what to do and how to do it, whom to serve and how to serve him. Now he must put himself entirely at the disposal of sheep to create the real hope in them. Who is the Spirit of God always knows what the highest thing to accomplish is and he will leave the others.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints, fill us of the Holy Spirit.

### Just so, your light must shine before others

### Is 58,7-10; Ps 111,4-8a.9; 1Cor 2,1-5; Mt 5,13-16.

### 5 FEBRUARY – V SUNDAY O.T.

In the Old Testament there is already talk of the righteous light that rises like dawn and shines in darkness, rather darkness will be as the noonday. For whom does this light rise? For those who live at the highest of the beauty and perfection of the commandment of love of the neighbour, abstaining from all evil, doing all good and all righteousness. Isaiah replaces the sterile practice of fasting with this sublime love.

*Cry out full-throated and unsparingly, lift up your voice like a trumpet blast; Tell my people their wickedness, and the house of Jacob their sins. They seek me day after day, and desire to know my ways, Like a nation that has done what is just and not abandoned the law of their God; They ask me to declare what is due them, pleased to gain access to God. "Why do we fast, and you do not see it? afflict ourselves, and you take no note of it?" Lo, on your fast day you carry out your own pursuits, and drive all your labourers. Yes, your fast ends in quarrelling and fighting, striking with wicked claw. Would that today you might fast so as to make your voice heard on high! Is this the manner of fasting I wish, of keeping a day of penance: That a man bow his head like a reed, and lie in sackcloth and ashes? Do you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord? This, rather, is the fasting that I wish: releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke; Setting free the oppressed, breaking every yoke; Sharing your bread with the hungry, sheltering the oppressed and the homeless; Clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own.*

*Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your wound shall quickly be healed; Your vindication shall go before you, and the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer, you shall cry for help, and he will say: Here I am! If you remove from your midst oppression, false accusation and malicious speech; If you bestow your bread on the hungry and satisfy the afflicted; Then light shall rise for you in the darkness, and the gloom shall become for you like midday; Then the Lord will guide you always and give you plenty even on the parched land. He will renew your strength, and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring whose water never fails. The ancient ruins shall be rebuilt for your sake, and the foundations from ages past you shall raise up; "Repairer of the breach," they shall call you, "Restorer of ruined homesteads." If you hold back your foot on the Sabbath from following your own pursuits on my holy day; If you call the Sabbath a delight, and the Lord’s holy day honourable; If you honour it by not following your ways, seeking your own interests, or speaking with malice - Then you shall delight in the Lord, and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth; I will nourish you with the heritage of Jacob, your father, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken (IS 58,1-14).*

Christ came to bring on earth the new justice which is the fulfilment of the ancient one. According to this new justice every one of his disciples must live the commandment of love if he wants his light to rise like dawn, to shine in darkness and his darkness to be as the noonday. If the Christian moves away from the new commandment of Jesus, lived on his model and example, he is and will remain darkness. Jesus reveals this truth teaching his followers that if their righteousness does not pass that of the scribes and Pharisees, there is no room for them in his kingdom. His kingdom is new, justice is new, the commandment is new and the light must be new.

*"You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned? It is no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lamp stand, where it gives light to all in the house. Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father.*

Jesus does not ask his disciples to do something. He tells them that they are a new essence and a new nature. In him they will become salt, will be made salt. They will receive a new life, a new being. They must always act according to this novelty created in them. Their work must be the result of their being. Then works are not the ones that must be cared for, but their being. They will have to worry about updating, improving, purifying and renewing their being in the Holy Spirit, because they will always be light and salt and will act as light and salt. We are in the novelty of nature.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints make us new and spiritual beings.

### And as many as touched it were healed

### Gen 1,1-19; Ps 103,1-2a.5-6.10.12.24.35c; Mk 6,53-56.

### 6 FEBRUARY

The Lord is often searched for a tangible good. This research is not condemned in the Holy Scriptures. Indeed, it is God himself that hears it. Does not Anna, the mother of Samuel, enter the temple to ask God for a son? The Lord grants her request.

*Hannah rose after one such meal at Shiloh, and presented herself before the Lord; at the time, Eli the priest was sitting on a chair near the doorpost of the Lord’s temple. In her bitterness she prayed to the Lord, weeping copiously, and she made a vow, promising: "O Lord of hosts, if you look with pity on the misery of your handmaid, if you remember me and do not forget me, if you give your handmaid a male child, I will give him to the Lord for as long as he lives; neither wine nor liquor shall he drink, and no razor shall ever touch his head." As she remained long at prayer before the Lord, Eli watched her mouth, for Hannah was praying silently; though her lips were moving, her voice could not be heard. Eli, thinking her drunk, said to her, "How long will you make a drunken show of yourself? Sober up from your wine!" "It isn't that, my lord," Hannah answered. "I am an unhappy woman. I have had neither wine nor liquor; I was only pouring out my troubles to the Lord. Do not think your handmaid a ne'er-do-well; my prayer has been prompted by my deep sorrow and misery." Eli said, "Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him." She replied, "Think kindly of your maidservant," and left. She went to her quarters, ate and drank with her husband, and no longer appeared downcast.*

*Early the next morning they worshiped before the Lord and then returned to their home in Ramah. When Elkanah had relations with his wife Hannah, the Lord remembered her. She conceived, and at the end of her term bore a son whom she called Samuel, since she had asked the Lord for him. The next time her husband Elkanah was going up with the rest of his household to offer the customary sacrifice to the Lord and to fulfil his vows, Hannah did not go, explaining to her husband, "Once the child is weaned, I will take him to appear before the Lord and to remain there forever; I will offer him as a perpetual nazirite." Her husband Elkanah answered her: "Do what you think best; wait until you have weaned him. Only, may the Lord bring your resolve to fulfilment!" And so she remained at home and nursed her son until she had weaned him. Once he was weaned, she brought him up with her, along with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour, and a skin of wine, and presented him at the temple of the Lord in Shiloh. After the boy's father had sacrificed the young bull, Hannah, his mother, approached Eli and said: "Pardon, my lord! As you live my lord, I am the woman who stood near you here, praying to the Lord. I prayed for this child, and the Lord granted my request. Now I, in turn, give him to the Lord; as long as he lives, he shall be dedicated to the Lord." She left him there (1Sam 1,9-28).*

 It is up to whoever is responsible for the leadership of the people of the Lord to educate every heart so that it searches the Lord in truth. The first search to be done to God is the gift of his will. The second request is to ask every force so that it is fulfilled. The third is to ask all wisdom, intelligence, knowledge, so that he can teach them to his brothers. An urgent request and before any other is begging for the forgiveness of sins. The minister of the Lord must not blame those who turn to God for some favour for the time, scolding and warning them so that they do not act in a disorderly manner. Instead, with infinite wisdom, they must help them with supreme prudence, unlimited charity so that they learn also to ask for the goods of the spirit and of true salvation. Finally they have to complete their teaching of love by adding the supreme of truths. God gives every material good when one sincerely seeks his kingdom.

*After making the crossing, they came to land at Gennesaret and tied up there. As they were leaving the boat, people immediately recognized him. They scurried about the surrounding country and began to bring in the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. Whatever villages or towns or countryside he entered, they laid the sick in the marketplaces and begged him that they might touch only the tassel on his cloak; and as many as touched it were healed.*

Jesus always gave every miracle. No one has returned home empty-handed. All have been fulfilled in their demands. However, with infinite love He taught, explained, illuminated, encouraged and created in the hearts an ever new hope.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints, fill us with the charity of Jesus.

### In favour of your tradition that you have handed on

### Gen 1,20-2,4a; Ps 8,2.4-9; Mk 7,1-13.

**7 FEBRUARY**

The Lord had always warned his people so that they remained faithful to the command received, with nothing added and nothing removed. He is unfaithful who takes away, but also who adds. The real drama of every religion is not only when is removed. An infinitely greater drama is when it is added. Massacres, wars, genocides, mass purges and a thousand other things that make God hateful could be added and in fact are added. This is the true satanic art: making God, the Church and her ministers hateful, so he has a good game. Today, however, there is another satanic game, that of minimizing every commandment, depriving it of its value of obligation. The prince of evil knows when to add and knows when to remove and so always all of his children.

*"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? (Dt 4,1-8).*

 Removing creates a real spiritual chaos within the people of God. Without the real command of the Lord there is no social, spiritual, moral, political, economic and familiar order. Everything is destroyed and is lost. Injustice, oppression, robbery, theft, adultery, free wickedness, false testimonies reign. Without the commandment is the death of the people, the Church, the family and society. Adding however the Lord is made hateful. Only the Lord knows the weights that the human heart can carry and imposes them to him gradually. The Lord is eternal knowledge, divine wisdom and supernaturalintelligence. He knows what is right for every man.

*Now when the Pharisees with some scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around him, they observed that some of his disciples ate their meals with unclean, that is, unwashed, hands. (For the Pharisees and, in fact, all Jews, do not eat without carefully washing their hands, keeping the tradition of the elders. And on coming from the marketplace they do not eat without purifying themselves. And there are many other things that they have traditionally observed, the purification of cups and jugs and kettles (and beds).) So the Pharisees and scribes questioned him, "Why do your disciples not follow the tradition of the elders but instead eat a meal with unclean hands?"*

*He responded, "Well did Isaiah prophesy about you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honours me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; In vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines human precepts.' You disregard God's commandment but cling to human tradition." He went on to say, "How well you have set aside the commandment of God in order to uphold your tradition! For Moses said, 'Honour your father and your mother,' and 'Whoever curses father or mother shall die.' Yet you say, 'If a person says to father or mother, "Any support you might have had from me is qorban"' (meaning, dedicated to God), you allow him to do nothing more for his father or mother. You nullify the word of God in favour of your tradition that you have handed on. And you do many such things."*

Jesus did not come to give legitimacy to the many traditions of men. He was sent to give beauty, splendour, full light, eternal perfection to every Word of his Father. Washing hands before taking food is common sense and you cannot always. Obeying the Word of the Lord is keeping soul and spirit in the highest purity that come from God. This purity wants to Christ Jesus. He has come for the heart, not for the hands. He is interested about the soul to be delivered to his Holy Father.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints make us pure at heart and soul.

### Are even you likewise without understanding?

### Gen 2,4b-9.15-17; Ps 103,1-2a.27-30; Mk 7,14-23.

### 8 FEBRUARY

Jesus wants his disciples, people of great knowledge, wisdom and immediate intelligence. He does not want them people who hardly understand where the purest truth of things concerning his Father, is. He wants them to be able to instantly grasp the essence of light and darkness, good and evil, of what belongs to heaven and what instead is of the earth. Even if they are not still clothed with power from High up, they can and must at least move forward in history as men with an excellent discernment. After having called blessed the man whose sin is forgiven, Psalm closes with the commitment of the Lord to instruct his faithful whom He does not want like mules without intelligence. Who loves God must always ask God to enlighten him with his light.

*How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered!**How blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit!**I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I did not hide; I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the Lord”; And You forgave the guilt of my sin.**You are my hiding place; You preserve me from trouble; You surround me with songs of deliverance.**I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you.**Do not be as the horse or as the mule, Whose trappings include bit and bridle to hold them in check, Otherwise they will not come near to you.**Many are the sorrows of the wicked, But he who trusts in the Lord, loving kindness shall surround him.**Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you righteous ones; And shout for joy, all you who are upright in heart (Ps 32 (31) 1-11).*

Even if the Holy Spirit was not poured on every believer, never does the Lord deprive of His wisdom those who ask him it. Solomon tells us that the quality of wisdom is its immediate agility in understanding everything. This is what Jesus asks.

*For in her is a spirit intelligent, holy, unique, Manifold, subtle, agile, clear, unstained, certain, Not baneful, loving the good, keen, unhampered, beneficent, kindly, Firm, secure, tranquil, all-powerful, all-seeing, And pervading all spirits, though they be intelligent, pure and very subtle. For Wisdom is mobile beyond all motion, and she penetrates and pervades all things by reason of her purity. For she is an aura of the might of God and a pure effusion of the glory of the Almighty; therefore nought that is sullied enters into her. For she is the refulgence of eternal light, the spotless mirror of the power of God, the image of his goodness. And she, who is one, can do all things, and renews everything while herself perduring; And passing into holy souls from age to age, she produces friends of God and prophets (Wis 7,22-27).*

If the Lord gave Solomon such wisdom because he prayed to him, he will also give it to the disciples of Jesus if they ask it to him. But what is the mistake that the disciples are making? That of thinking that everything must be unloaded on the shoulders of the Master. He is there, and He will have to think about everything. But Jesus wants the disciples to start with forming themselves an open mind. Let them begin to use all the power of intelligence.

*He summoned the crowd again and said to them, "Hear me, all of you, and understand. Nothing that enters one from outside can defile that person; but the things that come out from within are what defile." When he got home away from the crowd his disciples questioned him about the parable. He said to them, "Are even you likewise without understanding? Do you not realize that everything that goes into a person from outside cannot defile, since it enters not the heart but the stomach and passes out into the latrine?" (Thus he declared all foods clean.) "But what comes out of a person, that is what defiles. From within people, from their hearts, come evil thoughts, unchastity, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, licentiousness, envy, blasphemy, arrogance, folly. All these evils come from within and they defile."*

It is not proper of intelligence knowing that the heart is not contaminated by an unclean hand? Is it not of wisdom and of a sound discernment to know that the impure heart due to all thoughts and evil desires that dwell in it defiles the whole man? It is as if the disciples of Jesus had only a taste for silly, futile, vain and idle questions. For them they consume a lifetime, wasting all the time that should be used and reserved for the great questions of salvation.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints make us smart for the Gospel.

### She begged him to drive the demon out of her daughter

### Gen 2,18-25; Ps 127,1-5; Mk 7,24-30.

**9 FEBRUARY**

Solomon asks God that every prayer raised to him from his holy temple, or looking towards it, be heard, heeded. Not only the Lord must fulfil the demands of his people, but also those of the peoples, of the Gentiles.

*Listen to the petitions of your servant and of your people Israel which they offer in this place. Listen from your heavenly dwelling and grant pardon. "If a man sins against his neighbour and is required to take an oath sanctioned by a curse, when he comes and takes the oath before your altar in this temple, listen in heaven; take action and pass judgment on your servants. Condemn the wicked and punish him for his conduct, but acquit the just and establish his innocence. "If your people Israel sin against you and are defeated by an enemy, and if then they return to you, praise your name, pray to you, and entreat you in this temple, listen in heaven and forgive the sin of your people Israel, and bring them back to the land you gave their fathers. "If the sky is closed, so that there is no rain, because they have sinned against you and you afflict them, and if then they repent of their sin, and pray, and praise your name in this place, listen in heaven and forgive the sin of your servant and of your people Israel, teaching them the right way to live and sending rain upon this land of yours which you have given to your people as their heritage.*

*"If there is famine in the land or pestilence; or if blight comes, or mildew, or a locust swarm, or devouring insects; if an enemy of your people besieges them in one of their cities; whatever plague or sickness there may be, if then any one (of your entire people Israel) has remorse of conscience and offers some prayer or petition, stretching out his hands toward this temple, listen from your heavenly dwelling place and forgive. You who alone know the hearts of all men, render to each one of them according to his conduct; knowing their hearts, so treat them that they may fear you as long as they live on the land you gave our fathers. "To the foreigner, likewise, who is not of your people Israel, but comes from a distant land to honour you (since men will learn of your great name and your mighty hand and your outstretched arm), when he comes and prays toward this temple, listen from your heavenly dwelling. Do all that the foreigner asks of you, that all the peoples of the earth may know your name, may fear you as do your people Israel, and may acknowledge that this temple which I have built is dedicated to your honour (1Kings 8,30-43).*

Jesus is the new Temple of God. So far he has heard every prayer, of every man, giving them all the required grace and the impetrated miracle. Why then he does not instantly hear the cry of this afflicted mother for the health of her daughter? The woman herself praying Jesus suggests us the answer. First, she is put to a test of faith. She overcomes it with sum intelligence and true wisdom and Christ Jesus cannot but fulfil her. He must fulfil her. Her faith deserves it. If he did not hear her he would commit an injustice and in his kingdom never must a single injustice for non listening, reign.

*From that place he went off to the district of Tyre. He entered a house and wanted no one to know about it, but he could not escape notice. Soon a woman whose daughter had an unclean spirit heard about him. She came and fell at his feet. The woman was a Greek, a Syrophoenician by birth, and she begged him to drive the demon out of her daughter. He said to her, "Let the children be fed first. For it is not right to take the food of the children and throw it to the dogs." She replied and said to him, "Lord, even the dogs under the table eat the children's scraps." Then he said to her, "For saying this, you may go. The demon has gone out of your daughter." When the woman went home, she found the child lying in bed and the demon gone.*

We know that Jesus has never sent anyone away empty-handed. He has always heard all. We know that Jesus is the same yesterday, today and always. We can turn to him with all confidence and unfailing hope. He will always listen to our plea. It is also right that He often tests our faith and we fall, we are not wise and intelligent and tenacious as the Canaanite woman. We let ourselves be overwhelmed by our thoughts. We place our mind in first place. We no longer see his heart that loves us even unto death on a cross. Each not listening must interrogate us. Jesus asks us to give a real, updated setting to our faith. Faith is the way to be heard.

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

### But the more he ordered them not to, the more they proclaimed it

### Gen 3,1-8; Ps 31,1-2.5-7; Mk 7,31-37.

### 10 FEBRUARY

The Angel Raphael teaches Tobi and Tobias it is good to hide the secret of the king, while it is a source of honour to manifest the works of God. God must be praised for all his works in man's behalf. Praise and blessing are pure worship and true cult.

*So Tobiah called Raphael and said, "Take as your wages half of all that you have brought back, and go in peace." Raphael called the two men aside privately and said to them: "Thank God! Give him the praise and the glory. Before all the living, acknowledge the many good things he has done for you, by blessing and extolling his name in song. Before all men, honour and proclaim God's deeds, and do not be slack in praising him. A king's secret it is prudent to keep, but the works of God are to be declared and made known. Praise them with due honour. Do good, and evil will not find its way to you. Prayer and fasting are good, but better than either is almsgiving accompanied by righteousness. A little with righteousness is better than abundance with wickedness. It is better to give alms than to store up gold; for almsgiving saves one from death and expiates every sin. Those who regularly give alms shall enjoy a full life; but those habitually guilty of sin are their own worst enemies. "I will now tell you the whole truth; I will conceal nothing at all from you. I have already said to you, 'A king's secret it is prudent to keep, but the works of God are to be made known with due honour.' I can now tell you that when you, Tobit, and Sarah prayed, it was I who presented and read the record of your prayer before the Glory of the Lord; and I did the same thing when you used to bury the dead. When you did not hesitate to get up and leave your dinner in order to go and bury the dead, I was sent to put you to the test. At the same time, however, God commissioned me to heal you and your daughter-in-law Sarah. I am Raphael, one of the seven angels who enter and serve before the Glory of the Lord" (Tb 12,5-15).*

 The Psalmist invites all who fear God to get in silent listening. He wants to narrate every man what the Lord has done for him. Everyone must know the great love that the Lord has used him. He saved him and filled him with joy.

*Shout joyfully to God, all the earth; Sing the glory of His name; Make His praise glorious.**Say to God, “How awesome are Your works! Because of the greatness of Your power Your enemies will give feigned obedience to You.**“All the earth will worship You, And will sing praises to You; They will sing praises to Your name.” Come and see the works of God, Who is awesome in His deeds toward the sons of men.**He turned the sea into dry land; They passed through the river on foot; There let us rejoice in Him!**He rules by His might forever; His eyes keep watch on the nations; Let not the rebellious exalt themselves. Bless our God, O peoples, And sound His praise abroad,**Who keeps us in life And does not allow our feet to slip.**For You have tried us, O God; You have refined us as silver is refined.**You brought us into the net; You laid an oppressive burden upon our loins.**You made men ride over our heads; We went through fire and through water, Yet You brought us out into a place of abundance.**I shall come into Your house with burnt offerings; I shall pay You my vows,**Which my lips uttered And my mouth spoke when I was in distress.**I shall offer to You burnt offerings of fat beasts, With the smoke of rams; I shall make an offering of bulls with male goats. Come and hear, all who fear God, And I will tell of what He has done for my soul.**I cried to Him with my mouth, And He was extolled with my tongue.**If I regard wickedness in my heart, The Lord will not hear;**But certainly God has heard; He has given heed to the voice of my prayer.**Blessed be God, Who has not turned away my prayer Nor His loving kindness from me (Ps 66 (65) 1-20).*

Jesus does not want his works to be known. Why? He asks for silence due to the axis movement of his messianic work. Jesus senses danger.

*Again he left the district of Tyre and went by way of Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, into the district of the Decapolis. And people brought to him a deaf man who had a speech impediment and begged him to lay his hand on him. He took him off by himself away from the crowd. He put his finger into the man's ears and, spitting, touched his tongue; then he looked up to heaven and groaned, and said to him, "Ephphatha!" (that is, "Be opened!") And (immediately) the man's ears were opened, his speech impediment was removed, and he spoke plainly. He ordered them not to tell anyone. But the more he ordered them not to, the more they proclaimed it. They were exceedingly astonished and they said, "He has done all things well. He makes the deaf hear and (the) mute speak."*

From a messianic work of conversion, faith in the Gospel, return to God, creation of new heart, they were making of it a search of miracles. Many received the miracle, but it was not followed by any true and real conversion. This is not his mission.

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

**FEBRUARY 2017**

## SECOND DECADE OF FEBRUARY

### He ordered the crowd to sit down on the ground

### Gen 3,9-24; Ps 89,2-6.12-13; Mk 8,1-10.

### 11 FEBRUARY

Of Jesus it must be said that He does everything with wisdom. What the Holy Scripture confesses of the God Creator and Lord must even be preached of Christ Jesus. As God's wisdom is gathered in every *"detail"* of his creation, so also the wisdom of Christ the Lord is manifested and revealed in every "detail" of his word. Never in Jesus a word out of place is to be found. Never an order that is not needed to give fullness of realization also to the miracles that he is about to operate. This same wisdom is required to all the workers of the Gospel, of salvation and of the mission of redemption.

*Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, For His loving kindness is everlasting.**Give thanks to the God of gods, For His loving kindness is everlasting.**Give thanks to the Lord of lords, For His loving kindness is everlasting.**To Him who alone does great wonders, For His loving kindness is everlasting;**To Him who made the heavens with skill, For His loving kindness is everlasting;**To Him who spread out the earth above the waters, For His loving kindness is everlasting;**To Him who made the great lights, For His loving kindness is everlasting:**The sun to rule by day, For His loving kindness is everlasting,**The moon and stars to rule by night, For His loving kindness is everlasting.**To Him who smote the Egyptians in their firstborn, For His loving kindness is everlasting,**And brought Israel out from their midst, For His loving kindness is everlasting,*

*With a strong hand and an outstretched arm, For His loving kindness is everlasting.**To Him who divided the Red Sea asunder, For His loving kindness is everlasting,**And made Israel pass through the midst of it, For His loving kindness is everlasting;**But He overthrew Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea, For His loving kindness is everlasting.**To Him who led His people through the wilderness, For His loving kindness is everlasting;**To Him who smote great kings, For His loving kindness is everlasting,**And slew mighty kings, For His loving kindness is everlasting:**Sihon, king of the Amorites, For His loving kindness is everlasting,**And Og, king of Bashan, For His loving kindness is everlasting,**And gave their land as a heritage, For His loving kindness is everlasting,**Even a heritage to Israel His servant, For His loving kindness is everlasting.**Who remembered us in our low estate, For His loving kindness is everlasting,**And has rescued us from our adversaries, For His loving kindness is everlasting;**Who gives food to all flesh, For His loving kindness is everlasting.**Give thanks to the God of heaven, For His loving kindness is everlasting (Ps 136 (135) 1-26).*

If one observes the whole created universe he will find that everything gives truth and holiness to other things. Only man, in creation, is the big operator of disorder at all levels: moral, spiritual, physical. Man is governed by a selfishness that will lead humanity to the *"invisible, slow and inexorable suicide."* Creating any disorder in creation, its elements can no longer support each other and it all dies.

*In those days when there again was a great crowd without anything to eat, he summoned the disciples and said, "My heart is moved with pity for the crowd, because they have been with me now for three days and have nothing to eat. If I send them away hungry to their homes, they will collapse on the way, and some of them have come a great distance." His disciples answered him, "Where can anyone get enough bread to satisfy them here in this deserted place?" Still he asked them, "How many loaves do you have?" "Seven," they replied. He ordered the crowd to sit down on the ground. Then, taking the seven loaves he gave thanks, broke them, and gave them to his disciples to distribute, and they distributed them to the crowd. They also had a few fish. He said the blessing over them and ordered them distributed also. They ate and were satisfied. They picked up the fragments left over - seven baskets. There were about four thousand people. He dismissed them and got into the boat with his disciples and came to the region of Dalmanutha.*

Why does Jesus order that all sit down on the ground? What great significance has this detail? Sitting on the floor the strong does not prevail over the weak, the violent does not impose his power to trample the humble and submissive, the healthy has no pre-eminence on the sick, who is quick to the race is served in the same way as the person that is incapacitated. Another truth is of the highest theological value: the gift is received from God, it is not taken with violence, injustice, oppression, trampling or darkening of the brothers' rights. Staying seated, everyone waits patiently for the Lord to pass and make him a gift of what he needs to satisfy his hunger. This wisdom is required to every man. We all have to be imitators of God and of Christ Jesus. Wisdom gives to each what is his and does not allow any form of violence.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints make us wise and intelligent.

### Anything more is from the evil one

### Sir 15,16-21; Ps 118,1-2.4-5.17-18.33-34; 1Cor 2,6-10; Mt 5,17-37.

### 12 FEBRUARY – VI SUNDAY O.T.

The Lord asks his disciples a great purity. Purity of heart, mind, hands, eyes, desires, will and language. Note well. If a purity is missing, all the others are missing. If one is not pure at heart never will he be pure in the language and never will he be pure in thoughts, desires, will and hands. The six contrasts with the Old Law are not to be taken by themselves, as if one could exist without the other. One exists if the other exists and one is strong if the other is strong. If one is weak everyone will be weak. If one does not exist, all others will be non-existent.

The respect of a man begins from the eyes, mouth and desire. If eyes, mouth and desire are not pure, the whole body will be overwhelmed by impurity. Sometimes a single impure gaze leads a man to perdition. David for one immodest, shameless and lewd look became an adulterer and a murderer. Watching to have the government of the personal intimate is obligation for every disciple of Jesus. The senses must all be kept. No one might guard the senses, if he does not keep the heart. Everything is from the custody of the heart. That is why Jesus says that the pure at heart shall see God.

*"Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have come not to abolish but to fulfil. Amen, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter will pass from the law, until all things have taken place. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever obeys and teaches these commandments will be called greatest in the kingdom of heaven. I tell you, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

*"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. Settle with your opponent quickly while on the way to court with him. Otherwise your opponent will hand you over to the judge, and the judge will hand you over to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. Amen, I say to you, you will not be released until you have paid the last penny.*

*"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you, everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one of your members than to have your whole body thrown into Gehenna. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one of your members than to have your whole body go into Gehenna.*

*"It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife must give her a bill of divorce.' But I say to you, whoever divorces his wife (unless the marriage is unlawful) causes her to commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery. "Again you have heard that it was said to your ancestors, 'Do not take a false oath, but make good to the Lord all that you vow.' But I say to you, do not swear at all; not by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Do not swear by your head, for you cannot make a single hair white or black. Let your 'Yes' mean 'Yes,' and your 'No' mean 'No.' Anything more is from the evil one.*

Jesus affirm it with eternal wisdom. Those who want to keep the language must become good inside. He must be good in the soul and spirit. He must be a new tree. If the tree is always bad his words will be bad. But who can make the heart, the mind, the desires, the will, the soul, the spirit of man new is only Christ the Lord. Not only does He give the New Law. From the cross He pours the Spirit of God and all grace. The Holy Spirit creates the new man with the grace of Christ. The new man, feeding on the Holy Spirit and grace, can make all things new.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints make us new in the Holy Spirit.

### Why does this generation seek a sign?

### Gen 4,1-15.25; Ps 49,1.8.16-17.20-21; Mk 8,11-13.

### 13 FEBRUARY

Holy Scripture reveals to us how ephemeral signs are concerning the creation of the true faith in God Liberator, Saviour, Creator and Lord. Received the Lord, at once one was back in disobedience, rebellion, idolatry and transgression.

*Listen, O my people, to my instruction; Incline your ears to the words of my mouth.**I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old,**Which we have heard and known, And our fathers have told us.**We will not conceal them from their children, But tell to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, And His strength and His wondrous works that He has done.* *For He established a testimony in Jacob And appointed a law in Israel, Which He commanded our fathers That they should teach them to their children,**That the generation to come might know, even the children yet to be born, That they may arise and tell them to their children,**That they should put their confidence in God And not forget the works of God, But keep His commandments,**And not be like their fathers, A stubborn and rebellious generation, A generation that did not prepare its heart And whose spirit was not faithful to God.* *The sons of Ephraim were archers equipped with bows, Yet they turned back in the day of battle.**They did not keep the covenant of God
And refused to walk in His law;**They forgot His deeds And His miracles that He had shown them.*

*He wrought wonders before their fathers In the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan.**He divided the sea and caused them to pass through, And He made the waters stand up like a heap.**Then He led them with the cloud by day And all the night with a light of fire.**He split the rocks in the wilderness And gave them abundant drink like the ocean depths.**He brought forth streams also from the rock And caused waters to run down like rivers.**Yet they still continued to sin against Him, To rebel against the Most High in the desert. And in their heart they put God to the test By asking food according to their desire. Then they spoke against God; They said, “Can God prepare a table in the wilderness?**“Behold, He struck the rock so that waters gushed out, And streams were overflowing; Can He give bread also? Will He provide meat for His people?”**Therefore the Lord heard and was full of wrath; And a fire was kindled against Jacob And anger also mounted against Israel,**Because they did not believe in God And did not trust in His salvation.*

*Yet He commanded the clouds above And opened the doors of heaven;**He rained down manna upon them to eat And gave them food from heaven.**Man did eat the bread of [*[*j*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+78&version=NASB#fen-NASB-15139j)*]angels; He sent them food in abundance.**He caused the east wind to blow in the heavens And by His power He directed the south wind.**When He rained meat upon them like the dust, Even winged fowl like the sand of the seas,**Then He let them fall in the midst of their camp, Round about their dwellings.**So they ate and were well filled, And their desire He gave to them.**Before they had satisfied their desire, While their food was in their mouths,**The anger of God rose against them And killed some of their stoutest ones, And subdued the choice men of Israel.**In spite of all this they still sinned And did not believe in His wonderful works.**So He brought their days to an end in futility And their years in sudden terror.**When He killed them, then they sought Him, And returned and searched diligently for God;**And they remembered that God was their rock, And the Most High God their Redeemer.**But they deceived Him with their mouth And lied to Him with their tongue.**For their heart was not steadfast toward Him, Nor were they faithful in His covenant.**But He, being compassionate, forgave their iniquity and did not destroy them; And often He restrained His anger And did not arouse all His wrath.**Thus He remembered that they were but flesh, A wind that passes and does not return (Cf. Ps 78 (77) 1-72).*

The refusal of Jesus to give a sign from heaven to this generation is motivated by its corruption. While the fathers were still capable of conversion and the Lord attracted them to himself with powerful signs, the Pharisees of the time, had passed by far the limits of evil falling into sin against the Holy Spirit. There is no more salvation. Signs are useless. There is no greater sin for them. The measure is full, overflowing.

*The Pharisees came forward and began to argue with him, seeking from him a sign from heaven to test him. He sighed from the depth of his spirit and said, "Why does this generation seek a sign? Amen, I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation." Then he left them, got into the boat again, and went off to the other shore.*

Today, against the truth of Christ and His Word, instead it is thought that there is not even need of signs or other anymore. Eternal salvation is already guaranteed to all. Not even sacramental signs, starting from baptism are any longer needed. We are beyond the sin against the Holy Spirit of the Pharisees. We do not even tempt Christ anymore.

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

### The kingdom of God is at hand for you

### At 13,46-49; Ps 116,1-2; Lk 10,1-9.

### 14 FEBRUARY

In ancient times the Lord sent prophets among his people to proclaim a new future, of true conversion, true return to fidelity and love. Hosea proclaims that one day the non people would have become people and the non bride would be transformed into a faithful wife. The promise is long-term. Times are not short.

*Protest against your mother, protest! for she is not my wife, and I am not her husband. Let her remove her harlotry from before her, her adultery from between her breasts, Or I will strip her naked, leaving her as on the day of her birth; I will make her like the desert, reduce her to an arid land, and slay her with thirst. I will have no pity on her children, for they are the children of harlotry. Yes, their mother has played the harlot; she that conceived them has acted shamefully. "I will go after my lovers," she said, "who give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, my oil and my drink." So now I will lay bare her shame before the eyes of her lovers, and no one can deliver her out of my hand. I will bring an end to all her joy, her feasts, her new moons, her Sabbaths, and all her solemnities. I will lay waste her vines and fig trees, of which she said, "These are the hire my lovers have given me"; I will turn them into rank growth and wild beasts shall devour them. I will punish her for the days of the Baals, for whom she burnt incense While she decked herself out with her rings and her jewels, and, in going after her lovers, forgot me, says the Lord. Therefore, I will hedge in her way with thorns and erect a wall against her, so that she cannot find her paths. If she runs after her lovers, she shall not overtake them; if she looks for them she shall not find them. Then she shall say, "I will go back to my first husband, for it was better with me then than now."*

*So I will allure her; I will lead her into the desert and speak to her heart. From there I will give her the vineyards she had, and the valley of Achor as a door of hope. She shall respond there as in the days of her youth, when she came up from the land of Egypt. On that day, says the Lord, She shall call me "My husband," and never again "My baal." Then will I remove from her mouth the names of the Baals, so that they shall no longer be invoked. I will make a covenant for them on that day, with the beasts of the field, With the birds of the air, and with the things that crawl on the ground. Bow and sword and war I will destroy from the land, and I will let them take their rest in security. I will espouse you to me forever: I will espouse you in right and in justice, in love and in mercy; I will espouse you in fidelity, and you shall know the Lord. On that day I will respond, says the Lord; I will respond to the heavens, and they shall respond to the earth; The earth shall respond to the grain, and wine, and oil, and these shall respond to Jezreel. I will sow him for myself in the land, and I will have pity on Lo-ruhama. I will say to Lo-ammi, "You are my people," and he shall say, "My God!" (Hos 2,1-25).*

Jesus sends his apostles and disciples into the world. He does not send them out to proclaim a future full of hope, life, conversion and return to the Lord. He sends them so that they proclaim to the Lord's people that the kingdom of God is near, it is in their midst, it has arrived. Apostles and disciples must not proclaim a hope that will be fulfilled. They must reveal the hope that has been accomplished, is being realized and is happening before their eyes. The signs that they make must certify the truth of their words.

*After this the Lord appointed seventy (-two) others whom he sent ahead of him in pairs to every town and place he intended to visit. He said to them, "The harvest is abundant but the labourers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out labourers for his harvest. Go on your way; behold, I am sending you like lambs among wolves. Carry no money bag, no sack, no sandals; and greet no one along the way. Into whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this household.' If a peaceful person lives there, your peace will rest on him; but if not, it will return to you. Stay in the same house and eat and drink what is offered to you, for the labourer deserves his payment. Do not move about from one house to another. Whatever town you enter and they welcome you, eat what is set before you, cure the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God is at hand for you.'*

The time of waiting has ended. With Christ Jesus all of God's promises have been fulfilled. Now the whole Church, the Kingdom of God and its visible manifestation, must announce to the world that in Christ everything is done, realized and comes to pass. Not out of Christ, but in Christ. Not only with him, but also for Him. Who wants to enter the kingdom of God that is Jesus Christ, that is his body, must receive his Word and make generate by the Holy Spirit in the water as the true body of Christ and true son of God.

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

### I see people looking like trees and walking

### Gen 8,6-13.20-22; Ps 115,12-15.18-19; Mk 8,22-26.

### 15 FEBRUARY

In his hymn to charity, St. Paul tells us that today we see dimly, tomorrow, no more with the eyes of flesh, we shall see Him as He is, in his eternal beauty.

*If I speak in human and angelic tongues but do not have love, I am a resounding gong or a clashing cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy and comprehend all mysteries and all knowledge; if I have all faith so as to move mountains but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away everything I own, and if I hand my body over so that I may boast but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, (love) is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. If there are prophecies, they will be brought to nothing; if tongues, they will cease; if knowledge, it will be brought to nothing. For we know partially and we prophesy partially, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. When I was a child, I used to talk as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I put aside childish things. At present we see indistinctly, as in a mirror, but then face to face. At present I know partially; then I shall know fully, as I am fully known. So faith, hope, love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love (1Cor 13,1-13).*

In his First Letter, the Apostle John tells us that not only we do not know God as he is, we do not even already know by sight what we will be. Now it is the time of faith. Towards the vision of God in his eternal light one walks from faith to faith. Everything for us is from the Word of Jesus. He who walks in it reaches eternal life.

*See what love the Father has bestowed on us that we may be called the children of God. Yet so we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now; what we shall be has not yet been revealed. We do know that when it is revealed we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope based on him makes himself pure, as he is pure. Everyone who commits sin commits lawlessness, for sin is lawlessness. You know that he was revealed to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. No one who remains in him sins; no one who sins has seen him or known him (1Jn 3,1-6).*

The evangelist Mark tells us this wonderful mystery through the healing of a blind man occurred near the village of Bethsaida, away from the crowds. At first, after Jesus puts saliva on the eyes and lays his hands, the blind man says to Jesus that he sees us because he sees men as trees, walking. Jesus imposes his hands again on him and the blind man sees distinctly everything.

*When they arrived at Bethsaida, they brought to him a blind man and begged him to touch him. He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village. Putting spittle on his eyes he laid his hands on him and asked, "Do you see anything?" Looking up he replied, "I see people looking like trees and walking." Then he laid hands on his eyes a second time and he saw clearly; his sight was restored and he could see everything distinctly. Then he sent him home and said, "Do not even go into the village."*

We walk towards the eternal Kingdom of God, we must reach the Father's house. We can proceed toward it by faith alone, or rather from faith to faith. Heaven is seen by us less than trees, walking. If man had the vision of the Eternal House of God he would give his life a new direction, he would change everything of it. Instead not only does the man not see it, he often is not even able to imagine it. He often forgets it and that is why his life is more and more dipped in the quicksand of the things of the earth. How do you go about overcoming this difficulty? Growing in faith, in love and in hope. Joining more and more to Jesus the Lord. Growing in Christ and conforming to Him, you begin to enjoy Heaven.

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

### Who do people say that I am?

### Gen 9,1-13; Ps 101,16-21.29.22-23; Mk 8,27-33.

### 16 FEBRUARY

St. Paul responds to the question posed by Jesus Christ to his disciples and says that the world, people, neither Jews and nor Greeks have known Christ. Neither did they know before, nor do they know now who Jesus is. His whole missionary commitment is aimed at making Christ known to the Jews and Greeks. Without true knowledge of Christ, the world is in darkness.

*The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the learning of the learned I will set aside." Where is the wise one? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made the wisdom of the world foolish? For since in the wisdom of God the world did not come to know God through wisdom, it was the will of God through the foolishness of the proclamation to save those who have faith. For Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are called, Jews and Greeks alike, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.  It is due to him that you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, as well as righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, so that, as it is written, "Whoever boasts, should boast in the Lord."*

*When I came to you, brothers, proclaiming the mystery of God, I did not come with sublimity of words or of wisdom. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. I came to you in weakness and fear and much trembling, and my message and my proclamation were not with persuasive (words of) wisdom, but with a demonstration of spirit and power, so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God. Yet we do speak a wisdom to those who are mature, but not a wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age who are passing away. Rather, we speak God's wisdom, mysterious, hidden, which God predetermined before the ages for our glory, and which none of the rulers of this age knew; for if they had known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written: "What eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, and what has not entered the human heart, what God has prepared for those who love him," this God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit scrutinizes everything, even the depths of God (1Cor, 1,18-2,10).*

Jews and Gentiles are in the ignorance of Christ. The Apostles are the ones who must give them the right knowledge of the Saviour and Redeemer of the world. But do the apostles know who Jesus is? Do they know the contents of his mission? Do they know what Jesus asks to enter and live in the mystery of his salvation? Peter answers that Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ. Since now both he and the other Apostles know that He is the Christ, they must observe this truth the most rigorous silence. Why? The world of the Jews confuses the Christ of God with the Christ of the men, the Christ thought by God and the Christ thought by people. Even the Apostles still confuse the Christ of the Father and the Christ of the world. Now Jesus must devote himself to teach and manifest them the whole truth about his person and his mission. After they might talk about Him. They must!

*Now Jesus and his disciples set out for the villages of Caesarea Philippi. Along the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" They said in reply, "John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others one of the prophets." And he asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter said to him in reply, "You are the Messiah." Then he warned them not to tell anyone about him.*

No Apostle of the Lord must proclaim without purity of truth Jesus Christ and his mystery, his mission and his work. Saying badly Christ is leaving the world in its darkness. Nothing hurts more to the world than a proclamation of Christ done with no truth, in falsehood, according to the expectations of men. Better not to know the true Christ than to know a fake one. Lack of knowledge of the true Christ, leaves the world in darkness. Preaching a false Christ creates even stronger and sinister darkness. Today the rampant immorality of the world is also from the preaching of a false Christ.

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

**The Son of Man will be ashamed**

**MK 8,34-9,1.**

**FEBRUARY 17**

Jesus begins the formation of his disciples to the purest knowledge of his mission. What the Messiah will have to fulfil, all his disciples will have to fulfil. We can acknowledge what the Messiah will have to do by means of the Psalm. The Messiah comes to deny himself, annihilate himself, proclaim the truth of God, announce it in the great assembly of the world, give his life to God, letting his body be made a sacrifice, a holocaust. This is what Christ will have to do. This is what all his disciples will have to do. They are the visible manifestation of Christ.

*I waited patiently for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear the Lord and put their trust in him. Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, who does not look to the proud, to those who turn aside to false gods .Many, Lord my God, are the wonders you have done, the things you planned for us. None can compare with you; were I to speak and tell of your deeds, they would be too many to declare. Sacrifice and offering you did not desire but my ears you have opened burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not require. Then I said, “Here I am, I have come it is written about me in the scroll. I desire to do your will, my God; your law is within my heart.”*

*I proclaim your saving acts in the great assembly; I do not seal my lips, Lord, as you know. I do not hide your righteousness in my heart; I speak of your faithfulness and your saving help. I do not conceal your love and your faithfulness from the great assembly. Do not withhold your mercy from me, Lord; may your love and faithfulness always protect me. For troubles without number surround me; my sins have overtaken me, and I cannot see. They are more than the hairs of my head, and my heart fails within me. Be pleased to save me, Lord; come quickly, Lord, to help me. May all who want to take my life be put to shame and confusion; may all who desire my ruin be turned back in disgrace. May those who say to me, “Aha! Aha!” be appalled at their own shame. But may all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you; may those who long for your saving help always say, “The Lord is great!” But as for me, I am poor and needy; may the Lord think of me. You are my help and my deliverer; you are my God, do not delay. (Psal 40, 1-18)*

What does being ashamed of Christ mean? It means not showing the truth of Christ and not making one’s own life the truth of Christ on our earth. Handing life over to sin, to vice, to transgression, putting one’s own body out of the Word of the Gospel is being ashamed of Christ. One does not proclaim Christ to the world in his truth testified by our life, one does not take away the body from darkness to wrap him with the light of Christ. Each body of the disciples that remains in the darkness is ashamed of Christ Jesus.

*He summoned the crowd with his disciples and said to them, "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and that of the gospel will save it. What profit is there for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? What could one give in exchange for his life? Whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this faithless and sinful generation,* *the Son of Man will be ashamed of when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."* *He also said to them, "Amen, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see that the kingdom of God has come in power."*

One is ashamed of Christ when one does not deny himself in the thoughts, one does not take one’s own cross, that is cross of obedience to every Word of Jesus, one does not follow Him toward the Golgotha, the place of the supreme testimony to Jesus the Lord. Through Him, in Him, with Him, we are willing to abandon our body in the hands of the executioner, so that our soul may reach the eternal dwelling of the divine light, where the body will also come with the resurrection of the righteous on the last day. Christ needs our body to fulfil his mission on earth. We give it to Him entirely, we are not ashamed of Him. We keep it all possessively for us, we are ashamed of Him.

Virgin Mary, Mother of Redemption, Angels, Saints, make us one only thing with Christ.

### This is my beloved Son. Listen to him

### Heb 11,1-7; Ps 144,2-5.10-11; Mk 9,2-13.

**18 FEBRUARY**

Moses and Elijah are the ones who know the Lord. They know that God first, with Moses, revealed himself like a fire that burns and is not consumed, immutable and eternal fire. Then he manifested himself as a fire that purifies and renews, forgives and is rich in mercy.

*The Lord added, "Go to the people and have them sanctify themselves today and tomorrow. Make them wash their garments and be ready for the third day; for on the third day the Lord will come down on Mount Sinai before the eyes of all the people. Set limits for the people all around the mountain, and tell them: Take care not to go up the mountain, or even to touch its base. If anyone touches the mountain, he must be put to death. No hand shall touch him; he must be stoned to death or killed with arrows. Such a one, man or beast, must not be allowed to live. Only when the ram's horn resounds may they go up to the mountain." Then Moses came down from the mountain to the people and had them sanctify themselves and wash their garments. He warned them, "Be ready for the third day. Have no intercourse with any woman." On the morning of the third day there were peals of thunder and lightning, and a heavy cloud over the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled. But Moses led the people out of the camp to meet God, and they stationed themselves at the foot of the mountain. Mount Sinai was all wrapped in smoke, for the Lord came down upon it in fire. The smoke rose from it as though from a furnace, and the whole mountain trembled violently. The trumpet blast grew louder and louder, while Moses was speaking and God answering him with thunder (Ex 19,10-19).*

With Elijah there is a further manifestation of God. He is not manifested as fire, like a mighty wind, like the earthquake, but as light wind, a gentle zephyr.

*There he came to a cave, where he took shelter. But the word of the Lord came to him, "Why are you here, Elijah?" He answered: "I have been most zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts, but the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to the sword. I alone am left, and they seek to take my life." Then the Lord said, "Go outside and stand on the mountain before the Lord; the Lord will be passing by." A strong and heavy wind was rending the mountains and crushing rocks before the Lord - but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake - but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake there was fire - but the Lord was not in the fire. After the fire there was a tiny whispering sound. When he heard this, Elijah hid his face in his cloak and went and stood at the entrance of the cave. A voice said to him, "Elijah, why are you here?" He replied, "I have been most zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts. But the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to the sword. I alone am left, and they seek to take my life" (1Kings 19,9-14).*

With Christ Jesus God is manifested as the crucified God, Humiliated God and annihilated God. As Moses and Elijah welcomed the new manifestation, so the disciples must welcome it. Their God is the Crucifix. This is his last manifestation.

*After six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John and led them up a high mountain apart by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no fuller on earth could bleach them. Then Elijah appeared to them along with Moses, and they were conversing with Jesus. Then Peter said to Jesus in reply, "Rabbi, it is good that we are here! Let us make three tents: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." He hardly knew what to say, they were so terrified. Then a cloud came, casting a shadow over them; then from the cloud came a voice, "This is my beloved Son. Listen to him." Suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone but Jesus alone with them. As they were coming down from the mountain, he charged them not to relate what they had seen to anyone, except when the Son of Man had risen from the dead. So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what rising from the dead meant. Then they asked him, "Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" He told them, "Elijah will indeed come first and restore all things, yet how is it written regarding the Son of Man that he must suffer greatly and be treated with contempt? But I tell you that Elijah has come and they did to him whatever they pleased, as it is written of him."*

The Crucified God is the last manifestation of God because it is not possible to descend beyond the crucifix. It is the last and it will accompany the whole history of man on earth.

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

### So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect

### Lv 19,1-2.17-18; Ps 102,1-4.8.10.12-13; 1Cor 3,16-23; Mt 5,38-48.

### 19 FEBRUARY – VII SUNDAY O.T.

In the desert, the Lord asks the people to be holy as He is Holy. What is the holiness of God? It is his universal love. Israel will have to love God and all men, as himself, though not according to his special law, but scrupulously observing the Law and the precepts of his God, of the Holy One of Israel, who is with him and above him.

*The Lord said to Moses, "Speak to the whole Israelite community and tell them: Be holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy. Revere your mother and father, and keep my Sabbaths. I, the Lord, am your God. "Do not turn aside to idols, nor make molten gods for yourselves. I, the Lord, am your God. "You shall not steal. You shall not lie or speak falsely to one another. You shall not swear falsely by my name, thus profaning the name of your God. I am the Lord. "You shall not defraud or rob your neighbour. You shall not withhold overnight the wages of your day labourer. You shall not curse the deaf, or put a stumbling block in front of the blind, but you shall fear your God. I am the Lord. "You shall not bear hatred for your brother in your heart. Though you may have to reprove your fellow man, do not incur sin because of him. Take no revenge and cherish no grudge against your fellow countrymen. You shall love your neighbour as yourself. I am the Lord. "Keep my statutes. "You shall not degrade your daughter by making a prostitute of her; else the land will become corrupt and full of lewdness. Keep my Sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary. I am the Lord. "Do not go to mediums or consult fortune-tellers, for you will be defiled by them. I, the Lord, am your God. "When an alien resides with you in your land, do not molest him. You shall treat the alien who resides with you no differently than the natives born among you; have the same love for him as for yourself; for you too were once aliens in the land of Egypt. I, the Lord, am your God”» (Cf. Lev 19,1-37).*

What does Jesus ask to all his disciples? The same thing the Father asks: *"Be holy, for I, Jesus, am the Holy One in your midst. Love from the cross as I love from the cross. Serve from the cross as I serve from the cross. Forgive from the cross as I forgive from the cross. Give tunic and cloak as I give tunic and cloak from the cross. Give all of you to your brothers, as I give my flesh, my blood, my spirit and my grace to all men."* In the New Testament you must love always keeping the eyes fixed on the Crucifix. If the eyes are detached from Him, the world conquers us. We can also love according to the Old Testament mode. Certainly we will not love in the manner of the New which are those of Jesus Crucified. But if we do not love like Him, becoming one with his cross, we have failed as his disciples. We love, but not with his Law and following his example.

*"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, offer no resistance to one who is evil. When someone strikes you on (your) right cheek, turn the other one to him as well. If anyone wants to go to law with you over your tunic, hand him your cloak as well. Should anyone press you into service for one mile, go with him for two miles. Give to the one who asks of you, and do not turn your back on one who wants to borrow.*

*"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your heavenly Father, for he makes his sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what recompense will you have? Do not the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brothers only, what is unusual about that? Do not the pagans do the same? So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

Loving according to Christ, like him, from the cross, is our eternal vocation. We must be educated, prepared and refined to this love. Like Jesus every day grew in wisdom and grace, so the disciple of Jesus must grow. If the disciple does not grow in grace, in wisdom and in virtues, loving as Christ the Lord will be increasingly difficult, if not impossible to him and he will fall back to a weak discipleship, not even incipient, not only of sin, but also of justification of sin. It is a following of scandal. Not even Christ will be preached anymore as the Crucified. He will be obscured for shame. How do you preach Christ behaving as enemies of his cross?

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

### What are you arguing about with them?

### Sir 1,1-10; Ps 92,1-2.5; Mk 9,14-29.

### 20 FEBRUARY

We can affirm that Jesus, again because he is directed and guided by the knowledge, wisdom and intelligence of the Holy Spirit knows how to enter into dialogue with hearts. To him it is enough to ask a single question. Then, from the answer it is He who guides history toward the fulfilment that He wants it to have. Jesus wants this knowledge and wisdom to be of each of his disciples. You cannot walk in history as its *"saviours and redeemers"*, unless you know how to enter into dialogue with it. Jesus almost never is presented as the Son of God. He is almost always presented as the Son of man on whom the Holy Spirit lives and dwells. Now the Spirit of God has been given, it is given, will be given to every disciple. Every disciple can and must be presented in history full of the Holy Spirit. It is his duty, if he wants to dialogue with it and produce excellent fruits of salvation.

The dialogue of Jesus is a very powerful evangelization, a gift of his highest truth. However, it is a human mode through which to commune with a heart. But if he sees that the heart is obstinate in its wickedness and malice, in its obstinacy in evil, or that it is in sin against the Holy Spirit, he announces the truth, denies all falsehood and then abandons the field. Jesus does not waste his precious time in saying words that he knows will not produce any fruit, or rather could exacerbate the discussion leading the other to gestures that could reach up to be stoned. Jesus knows when to start, what to say, how to go and when to finish. He asks this Holy Spirit intelligence of his disciples. Dialoguing is not to saying words, it is creating a mode of salvation. The aim of the dialogue is the proclamation of truth.

*When they came to the disciples, they saw a large crowd around them and scribes arguing with them. Immediately on seeing him, the whole crowd was utterly amazed. They ran up to him and greeted him. He asked them, "What are you arguing about with them?" Someone from the crowd answered him, "Teacher, I have brought to you my son possessed by a mute spirit. Wherever it seizes him, it throws him down; he foams at the mouth, grinds his teeth, and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive it out, but they were unable to do so." He said to them in reply, "O faithless generation, how long will I be with you? How long will I endure you? Bring him to me." They brought the boy to him. And when he saw him, the spirit immediately threw the boy into convulsions. As he fell to the ground, he began to roll around and foam at the mouth. Then he questioned his father, "How long has this been happening to him?"*

*He replied, "Since childhood. It has often thrown him into fire and into water to kill him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us." Jesus said to him, " 'If you can!' Everything is possible to one who has faith." Then the boy's father cried out, "I do believe, help my unbelief!" Jesus, on seeing a crowd rapidly gathering, rebuked the unclean spirit and said to it, "Mute and deaf spirit, I command you: come out of him and never enter him again!" Shouting and throwing the boy into convulsions, it came out. He became like a corpse, which caused many to say, "He is dead!" But Jesus took him by the hand, raised him, and he stood up. When he entered the house, his disciples asked him in private, "Why could we not drive it out?" He said to them, "This kind can only come out through prayer."*

Watching carefully everything, first of all, Jesus reveals that his is an unbelieving generation. The disciples and the crowd are unbelievers. The disciples are incredulous because they still do not believe in the mighty power of prayer. The crowds are incredulous because they do not believe in the Word of Jesus. They go to him for miracles, but not to put their heart in every Word that comes out of his mouth, which alone is the Word of eternal life. After having revealed the truth of the generation, he also reveals his truth. He is the Son of Man, he is the Son who must manifest to every man how great the mercy of the Father is. He heals the son and hands him over to the parent.

Never might there be true dialogue of salvation, if the person does not know his truth and does not realize his own truth in history. The disciples do not yet know their truth, which is the delivery of their hearts to the Spirit in prayer so that he may strengthen them for the fulfilment of the new truth that Jesus has created in them. Lacking realization of their truth, they have a sterile, fruitless and futile dialogue.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints make us real instruments of salvation.

**FEBRUARY 2017**

## THIRD DECADE OF FEBRUARY

### What were you arguing about on the way?

### Sir 2,1-13; Ps 36,3-4.18-19.27-28.39-40; Mk 9,30-37.

### 21 FEBRUARY

For a good dialogue, an excellent discussion it is necessary to know the truth of God, of Christ, of the Holy Spirit, of the disciples and of every member of the Church. Without knowledge of the truth, there is bickering, arguing, you are at war and never enters into dialogue. This is what happened in the community of Corinth. Living they in ignorance of the Holy Spirit and of the truth of his ministry gifts, they quarrelled and bickered, creating parties, factions, dividing and tearing the Church. Not even do they know the truth of the Eucharist and they came to the point of denying even the resurrection of Jesus.

*But if Christ is preached as raised from the dead, how can some among you say there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then neither has Christ been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then empty (too) is our preaching; empty, too, your faith. Then we are also false witnesses to God, because we testified against God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, neither has Christ been raised, and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is vain; you are still in your sins. Then those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are the most pitiable people of all. But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.*

*For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead came also through a human being. For just as in Adam all die, so too in Christ shall all be brought to life, but each one in proper order: Christ the first fruits; then, at his coming, those who belong to Christ; then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to his God and Father, when he has destroyed every sovereignty and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death, for "he subjected everything under his feet." But when it says that everything has been subjected, it is clear that it excludes the one who subjected everything to him. When everything is subjected to him, then the Son himself will (also) be subjected to the one who subjected everything to him, so that God may be all in all (1Cor 15,12-28).*

The disciples discuss among themselves who is the greater. It is a useless and even sinful discussion, because it puts one against the other and creates envy, resentment, jealousy in their hearts. Without the knowledge of the truth of Christ from which every other truth is, never might one keep a dialogue of love, justice, holiness and salvation. But even without the possession of the truth of the Father, no peace and no harmony is built on earth. If the Church wants to build bridges that put men in communion with Christ and from the communion with Christ, build their unity, she must always start by giving herself the supernatural and eternal truth, the whole incarnate truth in Jesus Christ, the whole truth that day by day the Holy Spirit reveals.

*They left from there and began a journey through Galilee, but he did not wish anyone to know about it. He was teaching his disciples and telling them, "The Son of Man is to be handed over to men and they will kill him, and three days after his death he will rise." But they did not understand the saying, and they were afraid to question him.*

*They came to Capernaum and, once inside the house, he began to ask them, "What were you arguing about on the way?" But they remained silent. They had been discussing among themselves on the way who was the greatest. Then he sat down, called the Twelve, and said to them, "If anyone wishes to be first, he shall be the last of all and the servant of all." Taking a child he placed it in their midst, and putting his arms around it he said to them, "Whoever receives one child such as this in my name, receives me; and whoever receives me, receives not me but the one who sent me."*

There is not always Jesus that comes and puts peace in the hearts installing in them his divine, eternal, incarnate, crucified and resurrected truth. There is not always Paul that takes the pen and writes in the fullness of the Holy Spirit all the truth of Christ and of his body. There are people who often sow only ignorance and falsehood and claim that you fruitful dialogues can be built with the world denying the truth of Christ, the Church, the Holy Spirit and every disciple of Jesus the Lord. Everything is from the truth.

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

### But who do you say that I am?

### 1Pt 5,1-4; Ps 22,2-6; Mt 16,13-19.

### 22 FEBRUARY

In the Gospels Peter not only has the highest place, conferred on him by Christ, this place is also reserved to him in Acts. It was he who took the floor before the descent of the Holy Spirit in the Upper Room for recomposing the number of the Twelve. It is he who on the day of Pentecost proclaims the resurrection of Christ to the whole world. It is also he who manifests the power of the Risen One that acts in the apostles and through the Apostles, with the healing of the lame man at the beautiful gate of the temple in Jerusalem.

*Now Peter and John were going up to the temple area for the three o'clock hour of prayer. And a man crippled from birth was carried and placed at the gate of the temple called "the Beautiful Gate" every day to beg for alms from the people who entered the temple. When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked for alms. But Peter looked intently at him, as did John, and said, "Look at us." He paid attention to them, expecting to receive something from them. Peter said, "I have neither silver nor gold, but what I do have I give you: in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazorean, (rise and) walk." Then Peter took him by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles grew strong. He leaped up, stood, and walked around, and went into the temple with them, walking and jumping and praising God. When all the people saw him walking and praising God, they recognized him as the one who used to sit begging at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, and they were filled with amazement and astonishment at what had happened to him.*

*As he clung to Peter and John, all the people hurried in amazement toward them in the portico called "Solomon's Portico." When Peter saw this, he addressed the people, "You Israelites, why are you amazed at this, and why do you look so intently at us as if we had made him walk by our own power or piety? The God of Abraham, (the God) of Isaac, and (the God) of Jacob, the God of our ancestors, has glorified his servant Jesus whom you handed over and denied in Pilate's presence, when he had decided to release him. You denied the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. The author of life you put to death, but God raised him from the dead; of this we are witnesses. And by faith in his name, this man, whom you see and know, his name has made strong, and the faith that comes through it has given him this perfect health, in the presence of all of you (At 3,1-16).*

In every moment of his life, the Church of Acts is gathered around Peter. Even when it came to open the doors of faith to the Gentiles in an official and solemn way, the Lord turns to Peter. The first ecumenical council is also chaired by him and sealed him in the decisions. Nothing is decided in the Church without Peter, nothing without his seal, nothing without his word which is the word that binds in heaven and on earth. Certainly the historical forms of the exercise of the pre-eminence authority throughout history are often changed, but Peter has never been deprived this place which puts him as the visible foundation and principle of unity in truth and charity for the whole Church.

*When Jesus went into the region of Caesarea Philippi he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter said in reply, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Jesus said to him in reply, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father. And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."*

Who then is Peter for the Church? He is the one who in the events of centuries and times will always have to say to the Church who the real Christ is and what the truth of the real Christ is, from which the truth of the whole Church and all her members is. This pre-eminence concerning the whole Church, to be lived in the Church, with the Church, for the Church, is his alone and no one else’s. If he wanted to deprive himself of it, he should recede from being Peter. The Church is always in need of Peter because she is always in need of Christ. A Church without Peter is a Church without any foundation of stability.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints, always give Peter to the Church.

### Everyone will be salted with fire

### Sir 5,1-10; Ps 1,1-5; Mk 9,41-50.

### 23 FEBRUARY

In eternity every man will be either wrapped by the fire of God's life or death by the fire of hell. That is how Apocalypse talks about the former and the latter fire. It is eternal truth.

*Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered to fight against the one riding the horse and against his army. The beast was caught and with it the false prophet who had performed in its sight the signs by which he led astray those who had accepted the mark of the beast and those who had worshiped its image. The two were thrown alive into the fiery pool burning with sulphur. The rest were killed by the sword that came out of the mouth of the one riding the horse, and all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh (Rev 19,19-21). The Devil who had led them astray was thrown into the pool of fire and sulphur, where the beast and the false prophet were. There they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. Next I saw a large white throne and the one who was sitting on it. The earth and the sky fled from his presence and there was no place for them. I saw the dead, the great and the lowly, standing before the throne, and scrolls were opened. Then another scroll was opened, the book of life. The dead were judged according to their deeds, by what was written in the scrolls. The sea gave up its dead; then Death and Hades gave up their dead. All the dead were judged according to their deeds. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the pool of fire. (This pool of fire is the second death. Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the pool of fire (Rev 20,7-15). But as for cowards, the unfaithful, the depraved, murderers, the unchaste, sorcerers, idol-worshipers, and deceivers of every sort, their lot is in the burning pool of fire and sulphur, which is the second death" (Rev 21,8).*

*I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, God's dwelling is with the human race. He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will always be with them (as their God). He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, (for) the old order has passed away" (Rev 21,3-4). He said to me, "They are accomplished. I (am) the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give a gift from the spring of life-giving water. The victor will inherit these gifts, and I shall be his God, and he will be my son (Rev 21,6-7).  I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God almighty and the Lamb. The city had no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gave it light, and its lamp was the Lamb. The nations will walk by its light, and to it the kings of the earth will bring their treasure. During the day its gates will never be shut, and there will be no night there. The treasure and wealth of the nations will be brought there, but nothing unclean will enter it, nor any (one) who does abominable things or tells lies. Only those will enter whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life (Rev 21,22-27). Nothing accursed will be found there anymore. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. They will look upon his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. Night will be no more, nor will they need light from lamp or sun, for the Lord God shall give them light, and they shall reign forever and ever (Rev 22,3-5).*

Jesus says that everyone will be salted with fire. He will be kept alive by the fire of eternal life which is the Lord, or will be preserved in eternal death by the fire of hell. Knowing this everyone will know what his eternal end will be. If he will have loved God, he will be wrapped by his life fire. If he was an operator of scandals he will end in fire of eternal hell. Fire of life for life, fire of death for death.

*Anyone who gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ, amen, I say to you, will surely not lose his reward. "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe (in me) to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were put around his neck and he were thrown into the sea. If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed than with two hands to go into Gehenna, into the unquenchable fire. And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life crippled than with two feet to be thrown into Gehenna. And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. Better for you to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into Gehenna, where 'their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.' "Everyone will be salted with fire. Salt is good, but if salt becomes insipid, with what will you restore its flavour? Keep salt in yourselves and you will have peace with one another."*

Not only must we repent of every scandal. It must also be repaired. Those who have been seduced to the evil of our bad works or by our falsehoods about God, man, the Church, must know that we have recanted and we are in the divine truth.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints keep us away from scandals.

### What God has joined together, no human being must separate

### Sir 6,5-17; Ps 118,12.16.18.27.34-35; Mk 10,1-12.

### 24 FEBRUARY

The transition from the unity of spirit, soul and body to the separation of initial unity into two spirits, two souls and two bodies took place with sin. It is always and only sin *"the ax"* that bisects into two the one body created by God in marriage. Genesis reveals this truth with supernatural, divine and eternal clarity. From sin death!

*So the Lord God cast a deep sleep on the man, and while he was asleep, he took out one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. The Lord God then built up into a woman the rib that he had taken from the man. When he brought her to the man, the man said: "This one, at last, is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; This one shall be called 'woman,' for out of 'her man' this one has been taken." That is why a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and the two of them become one body. The man and his wife were both naked, yet they felt no shame.*

*Now the serpent was the most cunning of all the animals that the Lord God had made. The serpent asked the woman, "Did God really tell you not to eat from any of the trees in the garden?" The woman answered the serpent: "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; it is only about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden that God said, 'You shall not eat it or even touch it, lest you die.'" But the serpent said to the woman: "You certainly will not die! No, God knows well that the moment you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods who know what is good and what is bad." The woman saw that the tree was good for food, pleasing to the eyes, and desirable for gaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized that they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves. When they heard the sound of the Lord God moving about in the garden at the breezy time of the day, the man and his wife hid themselves from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. The Lord God then called to the man and asked him, "Where are you?" He answered, "I heard you in the garden; but I was afraid, because I was naked, so I hid myself." Then he asked, "Who told you that you were naked? You have eaten, then, from the tree of which I had forbidden you to eat!" Gen 2,21-3-12).*

The hard heart of Moses could have been valid for Moses, never might it be valid for Jesus. Jesus came to create the new man in the Holy Spirit. His redemption is taking out the hard stone heart and in its place put a heart of flesh capable of loving, living in the purest obedience even the spousal commandment of unity.

*He set out from there and went into the district of Judea (and) across the Jordan. Again crowds gathered around him and, as was his custom, he again taught them. The Pharisees approached and asked, "Is it lawful for a husband to divorce his wife?" They were testing him. He said to them in reply, "What did Moses command you?" They replied, "Moses permitted him to write a bill of divorce and dismiss her." But Jesus told them, "Because of the hardness of your hearts he wrote you this commandment. But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother (and be joined to his wife), and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, no human being must separate." In the house the disciples again questioned him about this. He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her; and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."*

If you look carefully at all divisions, separations, breaks, divorces and every other failure relating to marriage, at the base there is always a sin, which is also revealed as a spiritual sloth, that is, the absence of any growth in grace and truth. Jesus did not go to the cross because he was the Son of God, but because he was the Son of Man and as the Son of Man the Gospel tells us that He grew in age, wisdom and grace. A baptized marries in the Church, receives the sacrament, that is, the gift of grace so that he may live the unity, union and communion. He does not feed on the grace, does not grow in the Holy Spirit and does not walk in the Gospel. It is evident that there is a prior guilty omission. It is because of this omission that marriages fail. God's grace is always effective if received and lived walking in the Word. It is a divine truth!

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints make us walk in the truth.

### Let the children come to me

### Sir 17,1-13; Ps 102,13-18; Mk 10,13-16.

### 25 FEBRUARY

In the first covenant given by God to Abraham it is asked that every male child must be circumcised on the eighth day. With circumcision the right to be God's people was acquired. One was the Lord as Abraham was of the Lord.

*God also said to Abraham: "On your part, you and your descendants after you must keep my covenant throughout the ages. This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you that you must keep: every male among you shall be circumcised. Circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and that shall be the mark of the covenant between you and me. Throughout the ages, every male among you, when he is eight days old, shall be circumcised, including house born slaves and those acquired with money from any foreigner who is not of your blood. Yes, both the house born slaves and those acquired with money must be circumcised. Thus my covenant shall be in your flesh as an everlasting pact. If a male is uncircumcised, that is, if the flesh of his foreskin has not been cut away, such a one shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant" (Gen 17,9-14).*

Samuel was handed over to God just weaned because he was at his service. The mother had consecrated him to the Lord. The Lord makes him a great prophet. God always accepts and welcomes gifts of men. Being consecrated to Him is the highest good.

*Early the next morning they worshiped before the Lord, and then returned to their home in Ramah. When Elkanah had relations with his wife Hannah, the Lord remembered her. She conceived, and at the end of her term bore a son whom she called Samuel, since she had asked the Lord for him. The next time her husband Elkanah was going up with the rest of his household to offer the customary sacrifice to the Lord and to fulfil his vows, Hannah did not go, explaining to her husband, "Once the child is weaned, I will take him to appear before the Lord and to remain there forever; I will offer him as a perpetual nazirite." Her husband Elkanah answered her: "Do what you think best; wait until you have weaned him. Only, may the Lord bring your resolve to fulfilment!" And so she remained at home and nursed her son until she had weaned him. Once he was weaned, she brought him up with her, along with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour, and a skin of wine, and presented him at the temple of the Lord in Shiloh. After the boy's father had sacrificed the young bull, Hannah, his mother, approached Eli and said: "Pardon, my lord! As you live my lord, I am the woman who stood near you here, praying to the Lord. I prayed for this child, and the Lord granted my request. Now I, in turn, give him to the Lord; as long as he lives, he shall be dedicated to the Lord." She left him there (1Sam 1,19-28).*

Jesus began to do things concerning his father from an early age. At twelve the Lord entrusts him the mandate to dialogue with the doctors of the temple on his eternal verities.

*Each year his parents went to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, and when he was twelve years old, they went up according to festival custom. After they had completed its days, as they were returning, the boy Jesus remained behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. Thinking that he was in the caravan, they journeyed for a day and looked for him among their relatives and acquaintances, but not finding him, they returned to Jerusalem to look for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions, and all who heard him were astounded at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him, they were astonished, and his mother said to him, "Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been looking for you with great anxiety." And he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" But they did not understand what he said to them (Lk 2,41-50).*

Once the children were of God and were baptized on the eighth day after birth. Now they are of the world and are left to grow without their "Lord, God, Owner and Shepherd". How does the Lord manage to take care of what is not entrusted to him? Either the child grows up under the hand of the Lord, or under that of the devil.

*And people were bringing children to him that he might touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this he became indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to me; do not prevent them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Amen, I say to you, whoever does not accept the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it." Then he embraced them and blessed them, placing his hands on them.*

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints make us think according to Christ.

### But seek the kingdom (of God) and his righteousness

### Is 49,14-15; Ps 61,2-3.6-9; 1 Cor 4,1-5; Mt 6,24-34.

### 26 FEBRUARY – VIII SUNDAY O.T.

Jesus said it. He did not come to abolish the Law and the Prophets, but to give them fulfilment. Now Jesus gives complete fulfilment to the Law of the Blessing promised by God to those who keep His commandments and remain faithful to them.

*"Thus, then, shall it be: if you continue to heed the voice of the Lord, your God, and are careful to observe all his commandments which I enjoin on you today, the Lord, your God, will raise you high above all the nations of the earth. When you hearken to the voice of the Lord, your God, all these blessings will come upon you and overwhelm you: "May you be blessed in the city, and blessed in the country! "Blessed be the fruit of your womb, the produce of your soil and the offspring of your livestock, the issue of your herds and the young of your flocks! "Blessed be your grain bin and your kneading bowl! "May you be blessed in your coming in, and blessed in your going out! "The Lord will beat down before you the enemies that rise up against you; though they come out against you from but one direction, they will flee before you in seven. The Lord will affirm his blessing upon you, on your barns and on all your undertakings, blessing you in the land that the Lord, your God, gives you.*

*Provided that you keep the commandments of the Lord, your God, and walk in his ways, he will establish you as a people sacred to himself, as he swore to you; so that, when all the nations of the earth see you bearing the name of the Lord, they will stand in awe of you. The Lord will increase in more than goodly measure the fruit of your womb, the offspring of your livestock, and the produce of your soil, in the land which he swore to your fathers he would give you. The Lord will open up for you his rich treasure house of the heavens, to give your land rain in due season, blessing all your undertakings, so that you will lend to many nations and borrow from none. The Lord will make you the head, not the tail, and you will always mount higher and not decline, as long as you obey the commandments of the Lord, your God, which I order you today to observe carefully; not turning aside to the right or to the left from any of the commandments which I now give you, in order to follow other gods and serve them (Dt 28,1-14).*

God is the Creator and Lord of his creation. The man recognizes his Lord and gives him his will, observing His law and his Commandments; the Lord gives to man all of creation. This will put itself all and entirely in his service for his greater good. What changes between the Old and New Testaments? Only the law changes. Before it was the law written by God on stone tablets, now it is the law written by God in the human heart that is his Holy Spirit. The man is consecrated to the Holy Spirit to follow his every motion, inspiration and light; God consecrates man his creation. If the man does not consecrate himself to God's Spirit, not even the creation will be consecrated to man. It will become harder than iron, bronze, cast iron and steel.

*"No one can serve two masters. He will either hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat (or drink), or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds in the sky; they do not sow or reap, they gather nothing into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are not you more important than they? Can any of you by worrying add a single moment to your life-span? Why are you anxious about clothes? Learn from the way the wild flowers grow. They do not work or spin. But I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendour was clothed like one of them. If God so clothes the grass of the field, which grows today and is thrown into the oven tomorrow, will he not much more provide for you, O you of little faith? So do not worry and say, 'What are we to eat?' or 'What are we to drink?' or 'What are we to wear?' All these things the pagans seek. Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom (of God) and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides. Do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself. Sufficient for a day is its own evil.*

It is evident that if a man is consecrated to wealth, he might never consecrate himself to God. Faith is already lacking. He does not believe that God puts His whole creation in his service. The trouble for the wealth is great, infinite folly. It is working for eternal perdition.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints, fill us with most pure faith.

### You are lacking in one thing

### Sir 17,20-28; Ps 31,1-2.5-7; Mk 10,17-27.

### 27 FEBRUARY

The Commandments, the Lord's Word, the Gospel, the Sermon on the Mount and every other teaching of Jesus are like the track for the train. For a train to go the track alone is not enough, you also need energy and the one who leads it. The track is the truth of the train, the energy is the powerful grace of Christ Jesus, the conductor is the Holy Spirit. Only He knows the destination of the train and which path go on. Without observing the Gospel we are out of track, derailed, we go nowhere. Without the powerful grace of God, we lack the necessary strength to move, without the *"Divine Driver"*, if we are the ones to guide it, we will bring our train there where it never should be, because its goal and its destination are quite different.

A man goes to Jesus. He asks him what he must do to gain eternal life. The answer is immediate. If you want eternal life, keep the Commandments. The man testifies that he is already on the line of eternal life. He does observe the Commandments. Jesus adds that it is not the guidance of our life to the Holy Spirit. Only thus it will its reach perfection, it will live according to the divine purpose for which it was created. At this proposal the man chooses to be the one to guide his life and he guides it bogging his train in the quicksand of the things of this world. This is the foolishness of the man: thinking he can drive his train according to truth.

For the train of human life to reach its perfection on earth and in heaven the three things must never be divorced, separated and divided. Track or Evangelical Law, energy or powerful grace of Christ Jesus that is drawn in the sacraments and in prayer, Driver or the Holy Spirit to whom life must be delivered, are one. Making of them three things, separating them, taking one and leaving the others leads to nowhere. This is why Jesus says that it is difficult for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Eternal salvation is difficult for him. The Commandments alone are not enough for the true salvation. The grace and the Holy Spirit are also needed. Jesus gives this man both the grace and the Holy Spirit and he rejects them in the name of his wealth.

*As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up, knelt down before him, and asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus answered him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: 'You shall not kill; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; you shall not defraud; honour your father and your mother.'" He replied and said to him, "Teacher, all of these I have observed from my youth." Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said to him, "You are lacking in one thing. Go, sell what you have, and give to (the) poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." At that statement his face fell, and he went away sad, for he had many possessions. Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" The disciples were amazed at his words.*

*So Jesus again said to them in reply, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to pass through (the) eye of (a) needle than for one who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." They were exceedingly astonished and said among themselves, "Then who can be saved?" Jesus looked at them and said, "For human beings it is impossible, but not for God. All things are possible for God."*

Is there no salvation for the rich, then? Certainly that there is salvation. There is salvation because God's grace can enter with power the heart of the rich, making him see the folly, vanity and the futility of riches. The Lord gives this grace. It is also up to us to ask it for all our brothers who have taken their lives and hold them firmly anchored in their hands. It is up to who is led by the Holy Spirit to pray for those who do not let themselves be led. But even who apparently seems to be a disciple of Jesus, often holds firmly his life in his hands. He does not delivery it to the Spirit of God and will never pray so that others deliver it to him.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints make us be of the Spirit of God.

### For my sake and for the sake of the gospel

### Sir 35,1-15; Ps 49,5-8.14.23; Mk 10,28-31.

### 28 FEBRUARY

Leaving everything is not for a higher and more noble asceticism. It is a demand of the Gospel. Leaving is mandatory for everyone, though each one according to a received vocation according to his particular offering made to the Lord. Everyone leaves, but not all equally.

*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).*

*Then he said to all, "If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. What profit is there for one to gain the whole world yet lose or forfeit himself? Whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. Truly I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God" (Lk 9,23-27).*

*(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 (Phil 3,7-11).*

*Although I am free in regard to all, I have made myself a slave to all so as to win over as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew to win over Jews; to those under the law I became like one under the law - though I myself am not under the law - to win over those under the law. To those outside the law I became like one outside the law - though I am not outside God's law but within the law of Christ - to win over those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, to win over the weak. I have become all things to all, to save at least some. All this I do for the sake of the gospel, so that I too may have a share in it. Do you not know that the runners in the stadium all run in the race, but only one wins the prize? Run so as to win. Every athlete exercises discipline in every way. They do it to win a perishable crown, but we an imperishable one. Thus I do not run aimlessly; I do not fight as if I were shadowboxing. No, I drive my body and train it, for fear that, after having preached to others, I myself should be disqualified (1Cor 9,19-27).*

Each one is obliged to leave in relation to the end to be attained. The end is not established by man, but by the Heavenly Father through His Holy Spirit. Even to celebrate a marriage according to truth one must leave his father and mother. Leaving is compulsory.

*Peter began to say to him, "We have given up everything and followed you." Jesus said, "Amen, I say to you, there is no one who has given up house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands for my sake and for the sake of the gospel who will not receive a hundred times more now in this present age: houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and eternal life in the age to come. But many that are first will be last, and (the) last will be first."*

Peter and the others to follow Jesus leave everything. It could not be otherwise. Who wants to be always on the move for the kingdom cannot attach himself to any stable thing. What will the reward be? They will not miss in anything. Everything will be given to them by the Heavenly Father. They will have persecutions. But a great glory will await them in heaven.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints help u to leave everything.