**SEPTEMBER 2017**

## FIRST DECADE OF SEPTEMBER

# Go instead to the merchants and buy some for yourselves

# 1Ts 4,1-8; Ps 96,1-2b.5-6.10-12; Mt 25,1-13.

### 1 SEPTEMBER

Wisdom is the daughter of the Lord's fear. The fear of the Lord is the son of faith in all his Word. There is no faith in the Word of the Lord, there is no fear of God and there is no wisdom. In their place spring out ignorance, stupidity, idolatry and immorality.

*All wisdom comes from the Lord and with him it remains forever. The sand of the seashore, the drops of rain, the days of eternity: who can number these? Heaven's height, earth's breadth, the depths of the abyss: who can explore these? Before all things else wisdom was created; and prudent understanding, from eternity. To whom has wisdom's root been revealed? Who knows her subtleties? There is but one, wise and truly awe-inspiring, seated upon his throne: It is the Lord; he created her, has seen her and taken note of her. He has poured her forth upon all his works, upon every living thing according to his bounty; he has lavished her upon his friends. Fear of the Lord is glory and splendour, gladness and a festive crown. Fear of the Lord warms the heart, giving gladness and joy and length of days. He who fears the Lord will have a happy end; even on the day of his death he will be blessed.*

*The beginning of wisdom is fear of the Lord, which is formed with the faithful in the womb. With devoted men was she created from of old, and with their children her beneficence abides. Fullness of wisdom is fear of the Lord; she inebriates men with her fruits. Her entire house she fills with choice foods, her granaries with her harvest. Wisdom's garland is fear of the Lord, with blossoms of peace and perfect health. Knowledge and full understanding she showers down; she heightens the glory of those who possess her. The root of wisdom is fear of the Lord; her branches are length of days. One cannot justify unjust anger; anger plunges a man to his downfall. A patient man need stand firm but for a time, and then contentment comes back to him. For a while he holds back his words, then the lips of many herald his wisdom (Si 1,1-21).*

The wise virgins are always wise, because they always know that without oil the lamp does not burn and does not light. They are wise at the beginning. They carry lamp and oil with them. They do not give oil to the foolish ones because otherwise the banquet room would have soon remained in the dark. With five lamps burning well, there will be plenty of light in the room.

*"Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise. The foolish ones, when taking their lamps, brought no oil with them, but the wise brought flasks of oil with their lamps. Since the bridegroom was long delayed, they all became drowsy and fell asleep. At midnight, there was a cry, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!' Then all those virgins got up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish ones said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise ones replied, 'No, for there may not be enough for us and you. Go instead to the merchants and buy some for yourselves.' While they went off to buy it, the bridegroom came and those who were ready went into the wedding feast with him. Then the door was locked. Afterwards the other virgins came and said, 'Lord, Lord, open the door for us!' But he said in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, I do not know you.' Therefore, stay awake, for you know neither the day nor the hour.*

Man's foolishness today is big, more than heaven and more than the depths of the sea. It is so big because man no longer believes in the fidelity of God in his every Word. It is possible the sky and the earth may pass, the mountains may also crumble, the sea may dry out, but God's fidelity will never fall in every Word he has spoken. We live in false mercy, false forgiveness, false Gospel, false Word, false truth, false justice and false faith. We have a false God. From this falsehood what wisdom can be born in our heart. It would be enough for us to believe that every Word of Jesus infallibly is fulfilled and wisdom would return to be our blood, the blood of our spiritual life. But who believes today that Jesus will tell him tomorrow, "I do not know you"? Did we not erase hell and leave only Paradise for everyone?

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

# To each according to his ability

# 1Ts 4,9-11; Ps 97,1.7-9; Mt 25,14-30.

### 2 SEPTEMBER

In the Gospel according to Matthew, the Speech of the Mountain ends with a definite Word of Jesus on who will go with Him in His Paradise and on who will not be known by Him. It is a clear Word, shining with a divine and eternal light. It is his eschatology.

*"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name? Did we not drive out demons in your name? Did we not do mighty deeds in your name?' Then I will declare to them solemnly, 'I never knew you. Depart from me, you evildoers.' "Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and buffeted the house. But it did not collapse; it had been set solidly on rock. And everyone who listens to these words of mine but does not act on them will be like a fool who built his house on sand. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and buffeted the house. And it collapsed and was completely ruined" (Mt 7,21-27).*

Jesus fulfils the mission that the Father has entrusted to him, before being crucified, he pronounces a new discourse, rather a series of speeches, does he perhaps change the Word, truth and faith? Does he maybe give an updated rule on eternal life? His last words spoken in Jerusalem to every man, not only does Jesus confirm the truth of the Speech of the Mountain, he develops it on three concentric circles. The first circle is the judgment on those who believed. Every Christian will be judged on faith. The second circle attests judgment on each gift received if it is put or not put to fruit. The third circle announces judgment on man's relationships with man. Judgment on faith, on the gifts of God and on the right relationships. One might say, *"I have no faith, I'm excluded from judgment."* You will be judged on charismas and relationships. Another might say, *"I have not received any charisma and I have never met a single person."* False! The Lord gives all charismas according to his abilities. No one might ever live alone. If he only lives with the body never might he live only with the spirit. Even the works of spiritual mercy have to be lived. How? Praying for the good of all.

*"It will be as when a man who was going on a journey called in his servants and entrusted his possessions to them. To one he gave five talents; to another, two; to a third, one - to each according to his ability. Then he went away. Immediately the one who received five talents went and traded with them, and made another five. Likewise, the one who received two made another two. But the man who received one went off and dug a hole in the ground and buried his master's money. After a long time the master of those servants came back and settled accounts with them. The one who had received five talents came forward bringing the additional five. He said, 'Master, you gave me five talents. See, I have made five more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities. Come, share your master's joy.' (Then) the one who had received two talents also came forward and said, 'Master, you gave me two talents. See, I have made two more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities. Come, share your master's joy.' Then the one who had received the one talent came forward and said, 'Master, I knew you were a demanding person, harvesting where you did not plant and gathering where you did not scatter; so out of fear I went off and buried your talent in the ground. Here it is back.' His master said to him in reply, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I did not plant and gather where I did not scatter? Should you not then have put my money in the bank so that I could have got it back with interest on my return? Now then! Take the talent from him and give it to the one with ten. For to everyone who has, more will be given and he will grow rich; but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And throw this useless servant into the darkness outside, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth.'*

Even of a very small gift one is responsible to God. The gifts are not put to fruit for themselves, but for the Lord, are not fruitful. No gift must be left without fruit.

Virgin Mary, Mother of Redemption, Angels, Saints, help us in all fructification.

# God forbid, Lord! No such thing shall ever happen to you

# Jer 20,7-9; Ps 62,26.8-9; Rm 12,1-2; Mt 16,21-27.

### 3 SEPTEMBER – XXII SUNDAY O.T.

Jesus is about to go to Jerusalem. It will be the last trip he will make with his disciples. From the Holy City he will go out alone to go to Golgotha ​​to be crucified. His apostles must be prepared to accept the mystery of his end and Jesus, after that Peter has confessed him in his truth of the Christ of God and the Messiah of the Lord, must explain them, enlightening them, that before being enthroned as the Messiah and Lord the prophecy of Isaiah on the Suffering Servant must be fulfilled in Him: *"The Son of Man will go to Jerusalem, will suffer greatly from the elders, chief priests and scribes, he will be killed and will rise on the third day."* Jesus announces his death as imminent. He announces it as a duty, an obligation to which he might never escape. The obligation never comes from one's conscience or will. Every obligation in Christ comes from his Father and immediate obedience must be given to the Father.

Peter's reaction is immediate. He tells Christ that he will be the one not allow this to happen. He will be the one to make sure that Jesus does not go to Jerusalem. A killed Messiah is not needed to anyone. They need a living Messiah, who heads a well-equipped army to defeat the Romans and take their political freedom. What does Peter do? In his spiritual arrogance he replaces himself with the Father, to whom Christ owes all obedience. He also replaces Christ Jesus, whom he owes all obedience. He takes the place of God and the place of Christ. He decides instead of God and Jesus the Lord. Jesus' answer is immediate: *"Go behind me, Satan! You are scandalizing me because you do not think according to God, but according to men!"* Who Is Jesus? The one who always thinks according to God. Who are Peter and the others? Those who always have to think according to Christ. On the other contrary, Peter thinks according to men. He is a true Satan, true tempter for Jesus. What does Jesus command him? That he is clothed with humility and does the disciple and not the master. This is the sin of the Christian today: he has replaced God, Christ Jesus, the Gospel and the Word. He took the place of God, Christ, the Gospel and the Word. If the Christian does not return to do the disciple of Jesus, there is no salvation on our earth, for there is no light of truth. The thoughts of men obscure the light of the Gospel.

*From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer greatly from the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed and on the third day be raised. Then Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, "God forbid, Lord! No such thing shall ever happen to you." He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle to me. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do."*

*Then Jesus said to his disciples, "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 will find it. What profit would there be for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? Or what can one give in exchange for his life? For the Son of Man will come with his angels in his Father's glory, and then he will repay everyone according to his conduct.*

Jesus not only illuminates the apostles on his mystery, he tells them that his mystery must be their mystery, rather much more. They must be the continuators of his mystery, though in the peculiarity of their cross, their ministry, their charismas and their obedience to the Holy Spirit. Through them, too, life for the world will be from their death to themselves, from their denial, which is full, perennial delivery and without hesitation, to the Word of Jesus, enlightened in their hearts and in their minds by the Holy Spirit. Only one is the way of salvation: that of the cross. The world is saved by whoever knows how to stay crucified with Christ on his personal cross. Who does not ascend to the cross of obedience to God or descends from it, immediately stops giving salvation and life. He becomes a death-giver. Now the apostles know what their life will be tomorrow: an uninterrupted exposure from the cross for the salvation of their brothers.

Virgin Mary, Mother of Redemption, Angels, Saints, make us a mystery of Christ Jesus.

# He was handed a scroll of the prophet Isaiah

# 1Ts 4,13-18; Ps 95,1.3-5.11-13; Lk 4,16-30.

### 4 SEPTEMBER

In the Gospel according to Matthew, Jesus presents himself to his disciples as the Giver of the Law of the kingdom. He came to rebuild David's hut that had fallen and announce what the Law that will govern forever and ever the hearts of those who will get converted to enter the kingdom of God that is near, that by now is in their midst. In the Gospel according to Luke Jesus as a beginning does not give the Law. Instead, he says what God wrote for him in the prophecy of Isaiah. He reveals what his personal program will be. Mind well. It is not a program being thought by him for himself. On the contrary, it is the life that the Father has given him from eternity, before his very incarnation.

Luke moves everything from the disciples to Jesus the Lord. And what must the disciples do? Nothing by themselves, for themselves. They will have to become the program that Jesus has come to realize. They are the blind, the poor, the prisoners, the oppressed, the burdened of an infinite debt to the Father and that he has come to condone, through the preaching of the great jubilee. God does not want to have anything from man, anymore. Man will have to allow him to forgive him and promise him that from this moment on he will always stay in his home. We can define the disciples the subject of the program. Jesus by himself, for himself, might do many things. He might never fulfil the mission entrusted him, if man does not let himself be transformed into a new man, into a real child of God and into a spiritual creature.

Serious problems are starting for Jesus. Those who hear do not believe in one word. They see him as a person who is not fit to accomplish such a high, challenging mission against the very human nature, by now so corrupted by sin that not even the blood of God, which is that of Christ Jesus, that of his body, succeeds in removing it from its death imprisonment and its agony of foolishness, insipidity and lack of intelligence in order to be able to welcome such a divine proposal, as the one heard today.

*He came to Nazareth, where he had grown up, and went according to his custom into the synagogue on the Sabbath day. He stood up to read and was handed a scroll of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord." Rolling up the scroll, he handed it back to the attendant and sat down, and the eyes of all in the synagogue looked intently at him. He said to them, "Today this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing." And all spoke highly of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They also asked, "Isn't this the son of Joseph?"*

*He said to them, "Surely you will quote me this proverb, 'Physician, cure yourself,' and say, 'Do here in your native place the things that we heard were done in Capernaum.'" And he said, "Amen, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own native place. Indeed, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah when the sky was closed for three and a half years and a severe famine spread over the entire land. It was to none of these that Elijah was sent, but only to a widow in Zarephath in the land of Sidon. Again, there were many lepers in Israel during the time of Elisha the prophet; yet not one of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian." When the people in the synagogue heard this, they were all filled with fury. They rose up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town had been built, to hurl him down headlong. But he passed through the midst of them and went away.*

What is the stupidity of these men? In pretending that Jesus is from their thoughts and requests. If their faith had been formed, they would have known that every Sent of God, including his Messiah, is never from his will, never from his thoughts and never from his plans. They would have known that Jesus cannot do miracles at the request of men, but only by obedience to his Father. Jesus accomplishes a miracle: he attests that He is not from their will, neither for good nor for evil. He is always from his Father. Those men become like stones, he passes in their midst and goes away.

Virgin Mary, Mother of Redemption, Angels, Saints, make us today Jesus’ program.

# What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth?

# 1 Ts 5,1-6.9-11; Ps 26,1.4.13-14; Lk 4,31-37.

### 5 SEPTEMBER

In the Gospel according to Matthew, after having revealed that he is powerful in words, Jesus reveals himself powerful in works, beginning his journey among men first healing a leper and then a pagan. There are two categories on the fringes of society. The leper is physically on the edge of the community of the children of Israel. The pagan is on the edge spiritually. There was no place for Him in the kingdom of God. Jesus brings back into the heart of the community and of his Father both the leper and the pagan. He gives them hope of true life.

For the Evangelist Luke there is an even more harsh isolation. It is that accomplished by Satan. This takes possession of a man's body and it is as if he deprived him of soul and spirit. There is like an emptying of the immaterial part, of man's vital part and in his place the impure spirit, the prince of the world, takes over. As an illness deprives you of body health, the diabolical possession deprives you of mind, heart, feelings, will and desires of good. It is as if man were the exclusive property of Satan, at his full service to take away the peace of hearts and minds of those who are near. Satan is a true creator of unrest.

Christ Jesus is God, the Only Son of the Father. Even the angels who rebelled against God were created by Him. Even of them He is the Lord, the Creator and the God. The owe Him ready, immediate and sudden obedience. He commands and they come out. He orders to leave the body vacant and they immediately leave. However, their cunning is great. They can no longer hurt men, but they want to bring a great harm to him, to Jesus, telling his truth, that truth that Jesus kept prudently hidden because the times of his revelation had not yet come: *"I know who you are The Holy One of God!" "You are the Messiah, the Christ of God! You are the one who has to come to the world!"* Jesus does not even permit this. He orders them to be silent and silence returns to the mission of Christ the Lord. When Satan says a truth about Christ or the man of Christ, or any other man, his is never a word of goodness. It is a word of truth, but to create the greatest harm to Christ and also to men. The truth that saves is always a word of love. Love is always obedience to God, to his Law and to his will. Satan does not love God's will. Even if he wanted, he could not. He is damned forever and in him there is only hatred for Jesus and desire to destroy him, even before he accomplishes his mission of salvation.

*Jesus then went down to Capernaum, a town of Galilee. He taught them on the Sabbath, and they were astonished at his teaching because he spoke with authority. In the synagogue there was a man with the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out in a loud voice, "Ha! What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are - the Holy One of God!" Jesus rebuked him and said, "Be quiet! Come out of him!" Then the demon threw the man down in front of them and came out of him without doing him any harm. They were all amazed and said to one another, "What is there about his word? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out." And news of him spread everywhere in the surrounding region.*

The people present see, draw consequences with an observation in the form of a question: *"What word is ever this one, that commands with authority and power unclean spirits and they go away?"* Jesus is not comparable to any other man. He does not need complex rituals to cure, heal, free, clean and purify. He only needs one word and this acts closely and from far, in his presence and absence. Once his word has been spoken, the command is performed in every part of the earth. If you put together all the *"great people"* of the earth, all the *"wise men"* of the world, all the *"founders"* of religion, they all can be said to be equal. Jesus is divinely and humanly beyond. Between him and all the others no comparison holds, no comparison is valid. He is the totally different, because he is the divinely and humanly other. Today, this truth is destroyed by his own followers. Darkness covers the hearts.

Virgin Mary, Mother of Redemption, Angels, Saints, make us true defenders of Jesus.

# I must proclaim the good news

# Col 1,1-8; Ps 51,10.11; Lk 4,38-44.

### 6 SEPTEMBER

The younger child leaves the paternal home, goes to a far country, falls into the abyss of spiritual and material misery. If his father had sent him daily with one of his servants, something to feed him, his son would have stayed forever in that land of desolation. Instead, in his great charity, the father puts him in a position to return, recovering in his heart the place that was his. All uneasiness, sadness, desolation, despair and great humiliation end for this man.

If Jesus limited himself to doing miracles, healing the bodies from their infirmities, even freeing men from devilish possessions, he would have forever left man in his spiritual misery. He would have healed the body, but not healed the spirit, not sanctified the soul, not re-led to God what is God, what only in God finds peace, joy, fullness of being, truth, justice and holiness. He would have made ephemeral actions, failing in all his mission which is of eternal redemption and salvation.

The miracle is of ephemeral, secondary end, which serves as a help to create credibility in Christ as the true man of God, his true prophet, so as one to place himself to listen to his every word, acknowledged and accepted as the true word of God. From the ephemeral, fleeting end one must pass to the main, essential end of true eternal life, which is the reception of the Word, the birth of faith and the return to the Father's house. Nothing serves the miracle if it does not generate the true faith in Christ Jesus, sent by the Father to bring His true Word on earth and create, in faith in it, the new man.

This divine rule also applies to the Church. Her love, her charity, her works of mercy both physical and spiritual, must create faith in her, faith in her Word which is of eternal life for every man. That is why it is necessary, indispensable, that the Church gives the truth of herself to the world, which is always from the truth of Christ. If she forgets herself, she separates herself from Christ, will not preach her truth, in which the whole truth of Christ is contained, she will work for secondary, ephemeral, fleeting and temporary ends. These ends will never solve the real problem of man which is the loss of God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, truth, light and grace. The Church does not have the mandate to free from material slavery, she must free from sin that is the source, the spring of all physical and spiritual slavery. Like Christ, she must fight the spirit of evil, take away every man from it, to bring him back to his Lord and God.

*After he left the synagogue, he entered the house of Simon. Simon's mother-in-law was afflicted with a severe fever, and they interceded with him about her. He stood over her, rebuked the fever, and it left her. She got up immediately and waited on them. At sunset, all who had people sick with various diseases brought them to him. He laid his hands on each of them and cured them. And demons also came out from many, shouting, "You are the Son of God." But he rebuked them and did not allow them to speak because they knew that he was the Messiah. At daybreak, Jesus left and went to a deserted place. The crowds went looking for him, and when they came to him, they tried to prevent him from leaving them. But he said to them, "To the other towns also I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God, because for this purpose I have been sent." And he was preaching in the synagogues of Judea.*

The world always thinks about receiving ephemeral goods that last for a while. The Church must always believe that she has been sent to offer man the eternal good. She will also have to resort to fleeting goods, but these will never have to replace the eternal goods. If she does not give divine life to every heart, if she does not bring men to Christ, so that Christ brings them to the Father, her mission might be considered as failing. She will also have given some bread to the hungry in the body, but she has deprived the hungry in the soul and spirit of the true Bread that is Christ Jesus, the truth and grace of every man. Jesus never fell into this trap. The Holy Spirit, that was entirely on Him, in His heart and in His spirit, always guided him according to the truth of the Father.

Virgin Mary, Mother of Redemption, Angels, saints, make us real in the mission.

# At your command I will lower the nets

# Col 1,9-14; Ps 97,2-6; Lk 5,1-11.

### 7 SEPTEMBER

Today, Peter throws the nets *"on the Word of Jesus"*. Tomorrow, not only will he have to throw the net *"on the Word of Jesus"*, but also throw *"the net of the Word of Jesus"*. He must be the first to believe in every Word of the Master, throwing the Word on him to be taken by it. Having been taken by the Word, grasped by it, he will have to throw the net of the Word, so that every man of the earth is captured by it for Jesus. These two truths of Peter are revealed by Christ the Lord in two different moments.

*Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net thrown into the sea, which collects fish of every kind. When it is full they haul it ashore and sit down to put what is good into buckets. What is bad they throw away. Thus it will be at the end of the age. The angels will go out and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth (Mt 13,47-50). "Simon, Simon, behold Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat, but I have prayed that your own faith may not fail; and once you have turned back, you must strengthen your brothers." He said to him, "Lord, I am prepared to go to prison and to die with you." But he replied, "I tell you, Peter, before the cock crows this day, you will deny three times that you know me" (Lk 22,31-34).*

The day Peter were to forget either the former or latter mission, not throwing the net on the Word of Jesus anymore or not throwing the net of the Word of Jesus, his mission would be considered equal to a failure. No one might throw the net of the Word if he does not throw the net of his life on the Word of Jesus. Peter must be the first obedient to Christ if he wants to *"capture", "attract" and "conquer"* and catch fish in his net that obey to Jesus the Lord. Obedience arises from obedience, faith from faith, love from love and light from light. What is said about Peter, is valid for every other disciple of Jesus. Whoever wants to work for the kingdom must he first every day become more and more true kingdom of God. The world will see him as God's kingdom and will let itself be attracted by it. The crowds saw Christ as the true man of God and they came to Him to look for God's things. From God he gave God, from grace he infused grace and from the truth he created truth in hearts. Jesus must be always imitated. He is our only model. The disciple imitates Christ. The world imitates the disciple. If the disciple is detached from Christ, does not throw the net on his Word, not even the world will cast the net on the Word of the disciple. It does not see the connection between Christ and the disciple, for it sees only him.

*While the crowd was pressing in on Jesus and listening to the word of God, he was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret. He saw two boats there alongside the lake; the fishermen had disembarked and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, he asked him to put out a short distance from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. After he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch." Simon said in reply, "Master, we have worked hard all night and have caught nothing, but at your command I will lower the nets." When they had done this, they caught a great number of fish and their nets were tearing. They signalled to their partners in the other boat to come to help them. They came and filled both boats so that they were in danger of sinking. When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at the knees of Jesus and said, "Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man." For astonishment at the catch of fish they had made seized him and all those with him, and likewise James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners of Simon. Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men." When they brought their boats to the shore, they left everything and followed him.*

Today we can assert that two are the evils of the Christian. The first evil concerns himself: *"He no longer casts the net of his life on the Word of Jesus"*. Between the Word of Jesus and his there is an eternal abyss. Between the thought of Christ and that of the Christian there is a pit whose shores lie like the east from the west. The other evil consists in not throwing the net of the Word of Jesus into the world. Without this operation, never might it be possible for him to catch one man to make him become kingdom of God. Not being the kingdom, he cannot even build the kingdom of God in others anymore. It is urgent to remedy with immediacy.

Virgin Mary, Mother of Redemption, Angels, Saints, make us the true kingdom of God.

# Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son

# Mi 5,1-4a; oppure: Rm 8,28-30; Ps 12,4.6; Mt 1,1-16.18-23.

### 8 SEPTEMBER

God is not a prisoner of his Scripture, of his Word of yesterday, because Scripture is not its prisoner. What in fact, is Scripture? An ever-updated Word of God. It is the Word of God of yesterday added with today's Word of God. The truth of yesterday, must be lived in today's Word of God. It is today's Word of God that gives true life to yesterday's truth of God. Anyone who is imprisoned in the mere Scripture is a cultivator of a dead truth, unable to generate any life. A proof of it is the Church that draws her truth of today through a fourfold way: of Scripture, of Tradition, of the Magisterium and of Prophecy. If only one of these ways fails, the Church also finds herself cultivating dead truths incapable of any life. These four ways have been entrusted, delivered by Christ Jesus to the Holy Spirit. It is He the one that has to keep them constantly alive, so that together they can produce salvation. When does Joseph enter with fullness of truth the saving design of God? When he passes from Scripture, interpreted by him with great wisdom, to the most immediate obedience to his Lord. He listens, obeys, leaves the truth of yesterday and lives the truth of today, the Word of today.

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

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

The kingdom of God, the true one, is born from the listening to every Word that today comes to us from the mouth of God. The Virgin Mary listens and obeys, the eternal Son of the Father as a true man comes to the world from her. Joseph listens, obeys and for the gift of his life to the Lord, the Son of God is made Son of David, Messiah, Saviour and Redeemer. If Joseph had not obeyed, he would have remained righteous, but of a lifeless justice for the world. In his obedience his justice becomes salvation for every man. Mary and Joseph are the way of universal good for their faith, their listening, their own delivery to the Lord for all the days of their lives. Giuseppe's virginity is in all similar to the virginity of the Mother of Jesus. It consists of the gift of body, spirit, soul, heart, thoughts and desires. Mary and Joseph live only to fulfil the wishes of God. Other thoughts cannot dwell in their hearts. Their life is a gift. For this gift Jesus is the Son of God, Son of David, the only Mediator of salvation, redemption, grace, life and blessing between God and mankind.

Virgin Mary, Mother of Redemption, Angels, Saints, make us obedient in Christ.

# While he was going through a field of grain on a Sabbath

# Col 1,21-23; Ps 53,3-4.6.8; Lk 6,1-5.

### 9 SEPTEMBER

Not having God in their hearts and not knowing his truth, the Pharisees closed both eyes for every other commandment. Instead, they had the terror for the transgression of the third commandment, forbidding in it whatever action of man. It is fair to ask yourself, "Why of this terror and what are its origins?" The answer comes from the destruction of Jerusalem and the Babylonian exile that followed it. The Second Book of Chronicles almost exclusively attributes the ruin of the Lord's people to the violation of the Third Law Commandment.

*Likewise all the princes of Judah, the priests and the people added infidelity to infidelity, practicing all the abominations of the nations and polluting the Lord's temple which he had consecrated in Jerusalem. Early and often did the Lord, the God of their fathers, send his messengers to them, for he had compassion on his people and his dwelling place. But they mocked the messengers of God, despised his warnings, and scoffed at his prophets, until the anger of the Lord against his people was so inflamed that there was no remedy. Then he brought up against them the king of the Chaldeans, who slew their young men in their own sanctuary building, sparing neither young man nor maiden, neither the aged nor the decrepit; he delivered all of them over into his grip. All the utensils of the house of God, the large and the small, and the treasures of the Lord’s house and of the king and his princes, all these he brought to Babylon. They burnt the house of God, tore down the walls of Jerusalem, set all its palaces afire, and destroyed all its precious objects. Those who escaped the sword he carried captive to Babylon, where they became his and his sons' servants until the kingdom of the Persians came to power. All this was to fulfil the word of the Lord spoken by Jeremiah: "Until the land has retrieved its lost Sabbaths, during all the time it lies waste it shall have rest while seventy years are fulfilled" (2Cr 36,14-21).*

To Nehemiah the observance of the Sabbath was one of his priorities in the religious, moral and spiritual reform of the people that having returned from exile lived a general disaster.

*In those days I perceived that men in Judah were treading the winepresses on the Sabbath; that they were bringing in sheaves of grain, loading them on their asses, together with wine, grapes, figs, and every other kind of burden, and bringing them to Jerusalem on the Sabbath day. I warned them to sell none of these victuals. In Jerusalem itself the Tyrians who were resident there were importing fish and every other kind of merchandise and selling it to the Judahites on the Sabbath. I took the nobles of Judah to task, demanding of them: "What is this evil thing that you are doing, profaning the Sabbath day? Did not your fathers act in this same way, with the result that our God has brought all this evil upon us and upon this city? Would you add to the wrath against Israel by once more profaning the Sabbath?" When the shadows were falling on the gates of Jerusalem before the Sabbath, I ordered the doors to be closed and forbade them to be reopened till after the Sabbath. I posted some of my own men at the gates so that no burden might enter on the Sabbath day. The merchants and sellers of various kinds of merchandise spent the night once or twice outside Jerusalem, but then I warned them, saying to them: "Why do you spend the night alongside the wall? If you keep this up, I will lay hands on you!" From that time on, they did not return on the Sabbath. Then I ordered the Levites to purify themselves and to go and watch the gates, so that the Sabbath day might be kept holy (Ne 13,15-22).*

The right concern must never become obsession. The Law must be observed according to the truth God has set in it. Never putting in it our ideas, our thoughts and our anxieties or fears. The "True thought of the Law" is the Holy Ghost.

*While he was going through a field of grain on a Sabbath, his disciples were picking the heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands, and eating them. Some Pharisees said, "Why are you doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?" Jesus said to them in reply, "Have you not read what David did when he and those (who were) with him were hungry? (How) he went into the house of God, took the bread of offering, which only the priests could lawfully eat, ate of it, and shared it with his companions." Then he said to them, "The Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath."*

Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath, for He is the truth of the Sabbath and of every other commandment. He is the truth of everything, because the Holy Spirit dwells in Him.

Virgin Mary, Mother of Redemption, Angels, saints, make us home of the Holy Spirit.

# If your brother sins (against you)

# Ez 33,1.7-9; Ps 94,1-2.6-9; Rm 13,8-10; Mt 18,15-20.

### 10 SEPTEMBER – XXIII SUNDAY O.T.

The Church has a great need to preserve herself in the truth of Christ and for this reason everyone is obliged to preserve himself in truth and grow in it, so as to be able to help every other person, so that he too is preserved in truth.

*"Stop judging, that you may not be judged. For as you judge, so will you be judged, and the measure with which you measure will be measured out to you. Why do you notice the splinter in your brother's eye, but do not perceive the wooden beam in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove that splinter from your eye,' while the wooden beam is in your eye? You hypocrite, remove the wooden beam from your eye first; then you will see clearly to remove the splinter from your brother's eye (Mt 7,1-5). "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but underneath are ravenous wolves. By their fruits you will know them. Do people pick grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? Just so, every good tree bears good fruit, and a rotten tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a rotten tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. So by their fruits you will know them (Mt 7,15-20).*

Saint Paul dictates the Thessalonians the right rule so that truth, peace, joy and great holiness reign in the community. Everyone has to contribute doing his part, his commitment.

*We ask you, brothers, to respect those who are labouring among you and who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you, and to show esteem for them with special love on account of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. We urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, cheer the fainthearted, support the weak, be patient with all. See that no one returns evil for evil; rather, always seek what is good (both) for each other and for all. Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophetic utterances. Test everything; retain what is good. Refrain from every kind of evil. May the God of peace himself make you perfectly holy and may you entirely, spirit, soul, and body, be preserved blameless for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will also accomplish it (1Ts 5,12-24).*

A community in which each member does not help other members with his charity so that it grows and is preserved in the Gospel of Christ Jesus exposes all its children to spiritual death. It is the community that has to give life to itself. When charity disappears from it, truth will soon disappear. Having truth disappeared, it is darkness. You return to be world with the world, even though you declare yourself of Jesus Christ.

*"If your brother sins (against you), go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have won over your brother. If he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, so that 'every fact may be established on the testimony of two or three witnesses.' If he refuses to listen to them, tell the church. If he refuses to listen even to the church, then treat him as you would a Gentile or a tax collector. Amen, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again, (amen,) I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything for which they are to pray, it shall be granted to them by my heavenly Father. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."*

When does the community live in the truth of Christ and in his love? When are two or three gathered in his name, so that Jesus is in their midst? When everyone lives in the thought of Christ, trying to grow in obedience to the Word of Christ. One thought, one feeling: the thought and the feeling of Christ in every child of the community. It is not being together with the body that makes us of Jesus and with Jesus. Being together is in his heart, in his will, in his desires and in his Word. We are together in his name, when we all dwell in his heart and are led and guided by his Holy Spirit. When one is separated from the heart of Christ and the thought of the Holy Spirit, there is a multitude and not unity. A church full of people is always a multitude, rarely a community, because each one remains himself.

Virgin Mary, Mother of Redemption, Angels and Saints make us one thing in Christ.

**SEPTEMBER 2017**

## SECOND DECADE OF SEPTEMBER

# The scribes and the Pharisees watched him closely

# Col 1,24-2,3; Ps 61,6-9; Lk 6,6-11.

### 11 SEPTEMBER

Scribes and Pharisees are neither seekers of truth and nor of wisdom in order to grow in a greater knowledge of God. Therefore even if they pass themselves off as men of God, they are not, because it is proper of the man of God to seek his truth, being filled to the brim with his wisdom for a perfect knowledge of his Lord, Saviour and Father of his life. True seeker of Christ and of his truth is Saint Paul. He not only walks behind Christ, he runs to be able to reach him in the fullness of his light. Not only does he run for himself, he also prays for everyone and warns everyone so that they come to the full knowledge of their Lord, Saviour and Redeemer. It is in Him that all the treasures of the Father's truth and grace are enclosed. God does not give Himself except for Him and in Him.

*(But) whatever gains I had, these I have come to consider a loss because of Christ. More than that, I even consider everything as a loss because of the supreme good of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have accepted the loss of all things and I consider them so much rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having any righteousness of my own based on the law but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God, depending on faith to know him and the power of his resurrection and (the) sharing of his sufferings by being conformed to his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead. It is not that I have already taken hold of it or have already attained perfect maturity, but I continue my pursuit in hope that I may possess it, since I have indeed been taken possession of by Christ (Jesus). Brothers, I for my part do not consider myself to have taken possession. Just one thing: forgetting what lies behind but straining forward to what lies ahead, I continue my pursuit toward the goal, the prize of God's upward calling, in Christ Jesus (Phil 3,7-14).*

*Therefore, I, too, hearing of your faith in the Lord Jesus and of your love for all the holy ones, do not cease giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation resulting in knowledge of him. May the eyes of (your) hearts be enlightened, that you may know what is the hope that belongs to his call, what are the riches of glory in his inheritance among the holy ones, and what is the surpassing greatness of his power for us who believe, in accord with the exercise of his great might (Ef 1,15-19).*  *So I declare and testify in the Lord that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds; darkened in understanding, alienated from the life of God because of their ignorance, because of their hardness of heart, they have become callous and have handed themselves over to licentiousness for the practice of every kind of impurity to excess. That is not how you learned Christ, assuming that you have heard of him and were taught in him, as truth is in Jesus, that you should put away the old self of your former way of life, corrupted through deceitful desires, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new self, created in God's way in righteousness and holiness of truth (Eph 4,20-24).*

Jesus knows that Scribes and Pharisees are there in order to find something that does not exactly conform to the Law so as to be able to accuse him and take him out of the way. His prudence is utmost. He moves the axis of reasoning: he passes from the Sabbath to be observed to the good to be done. Does the Sabbath's observance perhaps erase the law of charity, goodness and love?

*On another Sabbath he went into the synagogue and taught, and there was a man there whose right hand was withered. The scribes and the Pharisees watched him closely to see if he would cure on the Sabbath so that they might discover a reason to accuse him. But he realized their intentions and said to the man with the withered hand, "Come up and stand before us." And he rose and stood there. Then Jesus said to them, "I ask you, is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath rather than to do evil, to save life rather than to destroy it?" Looking around at them all, he then said to him, "Stretch out your hand." He did so and his hand was restored. But they became enraged and discussed together what they might do to Jesus.*

Here is the eternal principle proclaimed by Jesus the Lord: No commandment can annul another commandment. Every commandment must give life to every other commandment. The Sabbath is given to love more and better both God and neighbour.

Virgin Mary, Mother of Redemption, Angels, Saints, teach us how to always love.

# He spent the night in prayer to God

# Col 2,6-15; Ps 144,1-2.8-11; Lk 6,12-19.

### 12 SEPTEMBER

The Father of Heaven is the sole administrator of his Church, just as he is the sole administrator of the whole life of Christ the Lord. If he is the only administrator, it is right he is the one to designate, to choose and to place in the right place those who many tomorrow will have to continue the work of salvation and redemption which today is of Jesus the Lord. One of the reproaches that God addresses to his people through the prophet Hosea concerns just the designation of kings. The people chose kings not requested and not thought of by God.

*A trumpet to your lips, You who watch over the house of the Lord! Since they have violated my covenant, and sinned against my law, While to me they cry out, "O, God of Israel, we know you!" The men of Israel have thrown away what is good; the enemy shall pursue them. They made kings, but not by my authority; they established princes, but without my approval. With their silver and gold they made idols for themselves, to their own destruction. Cast away your calf, O Samaria! my wrath is kindled against them; How long will they be unable to attain innocence in Israel? The work of an artisan no god at all, Destined for the flames -  such is the calf of Samaria! When they sow the wind, they shall reap the whirlwind; The stalk of grain that forms no ear can yield no flour; Even if it could, strangers would swallow it (Hos 8,1-7).*

Even a great prophet like Samuel can let himself be deceived by his eyes and heart, if God does not intervene in an instant to warn him that his consecrated is not in front of him. If you can deceive a prophet, every other man can be deceived.

*As they came, he looked at Eliab and thought, "Surely the Lord's anointed is here before him." But the Lord said to Samuel: "Do not judge from his appearance or from his lofty stature, because I have rejected him. Not as man sees does God see, because man sees the appearance but the Lord looks into the heart." Then Jesse called Abinadab and presented him before Samuel, who said, "The Lord has not chosen him." Next Jesse presented Shammah, but Samuel said, "The Lord has not chosen this one either." In the same way Jesse presented seven sons before Samuel, but Samuel said to Jesse, "The Lord has not chosen any one of these." Then Samuel asked Jesse, "Are these all the sons you have?" Jesse replied, "There is still the youngest, who is tending the sheep." Samuel said to Jesse, "Send for him; we will not begin the sacrificial banquet until he arrives here." Jesse sent and had the young man brought to them. He was ruddy, a youth handsome to behold and making a splendid appearance. The Lord said, "There-anoint him, for this is he!" Then Samuel, with the horn of oil in hand, anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and from that day on, the spirit of the Lord rushed upon David. When Samuel took his leave, he went to Ramah (1Sam 16.6-13).*

Before calling and choosing the Twelve, Jesus passes the night in prayer. Nothing will have to be from his will, but everything from the heart of the Father and all from the Holy Spirit. If a bishop before giving a name to be elected successor to the apostles spent the night in prayer and asked for advice to God, his presentation would be freed from every strategy of the earth and of every personal interest. So also the very rule of Christ the Lord applies to every other in the hierarchy of the authorities presiding over the appointment of a successor to the Apostles. There cannot be either lines of thought or lines of influence in the Church. Only the thought, the will of God, manifested by the Holy Spirit must reign in her. It is a life requirement!

*In those days he departed to the mountain to pray, and he spent the night in prayer to God. When day came, he called his disciples to himself, and from them he chose Twelve, whom he also named apostles: Simon, whom he named Peter, and his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called a Zealot, and Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.*

*And he came down with them and stood on a stretch of level ground. A great crowd of his disciples and a large number of the people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon came to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and even those who were tormented by unclean spirits were cured. Everyone in the crowd sought to touch him because power came forth from him and healed them all.*

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

# But woe to you who are rich

# Col 3,1-11; Ps 144,2-3.10-13ab; Lk 6,20-26.

### 13 SEPTEMBER

Matthew Evangelist begins his narration on the Words and works of Jesus, presenting him as the "Great Light" that comes to illuminate a land of darkness and soot, a region that inhabits and dwells in death. In this region not only rich and not only poor live. Poor and rich live, but all in darkness.

*When he heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. He left Nazareth and went to live in Capernaum by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali, that what had been said through Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled: "Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the way to the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people who sit in darkness have seen a great light, on those dwelling in a land overshadowed by death light has arisen." From that time on, Jesus began to preach and say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mt 4,12-17).*

The Father sends his Son on earth to enlighten poor and rich, hungry and satiated, those who are in weeping and on the contrary, those who are in the sinful enjoyment of the senses. To one and the other, the Lord God through Christ Jesus makes his light shine. The poor, the hungry, the weeping one is invited to remain on his cross of poverty, misery, sorrow, hunger, thirst and nudity. If he remains on this cross, without envy, without desires, with no anxiety for the things of this world, accepting his condition and blessing the Lord for this path that he has assigned him to attain eternal life, he will be comforted, consoled, satiated, blessed and elevated by him.

To the rich, to the satiated, to the always delighting the Father through Jesus Christ, tells him that he must come down from this cross of sin, otherwise God will be kept far away by it and he will end in eternal darkness. How will he come down from the cross of sin? Transforming his wealth into charity, alms and good works. By giving satiety, joy and comfort to his brothers. It is right to clarify a very high evangelical truth: the charity of the rich is not needed to the poor who accept his cross. The Lord thinks of the poor, if the poor lets himself be enlightened by the light of Christ Jesus and makes his life of the Gospel. Charity, alms serve the rich to open himself a door to enter into the kingdom of heaven tomorrow. The charity of the rich is not a matter of humanity, but of eternal life. It is not an anthropological or pure philanthropy issue, but a purely eschatological motive, of eternal life. Until we make of it a matter of social justice or purely anthropological or humanitarian, we are not announcers of the Gospel. We are world men who speak according to the world. We are ideologists of charity and its union organizers.

*And raising his eyes toward his disciples he said: "Blessed are you who are poor, for the kingdom of God is yours. Blessed are you who are now hungry, for you will be satisfied. Blessed are you who are now weeping, for you will laugh. Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude and insult you, and denounce your name as evil on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice and leap for joy on that day! Behold, your reward will be great in heaven. For their ancestors treated the prophets in the same way. But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. But woe to you who are filled now, for you will be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you will grieve and weep. Woe to you when all speak well of you, for their ancestors treated the false prophets in this way.*

The disciple of Jesus is not an anthropologist, he is not an ideologue, he is not even a constructor of equitable humanity showing solidarity. Christ Jesus did not send him into the world for these things. These things belong to the world and it is right to leave them to it. The Christian is a true eschatology builder. He must tell the poor to stay on the cross of his poverty as Christ remained on his. He must tell the rich to come down from the cross of sin of his selfishness if he wants to enter eternal life. A true eschatological work! A true illumination of eternal light! Having the Christian abolished eternal perdition, he became an ideologue of charity. He lacks real eschatology.

Virgin Mary, Mother of Redemption, Angels, Saints, make us announcers of Christ.

# That the world might be saved through him

# Nm 21,4b-9; Ps 77,1-2.34-38; Phil 2,6-11; Jn 3,13-17.

### 14 SEPTEMBER (Jn 3,13-17)

Jesus descends from heaven with his Incarnation. He is in eternity from the Father, with the Father, before the Father as a distinguished person from the Father, the only Mediator in his creation. He is his Eternal Son, he is his Word. As the Eternal Word, remaining the Eternal Word he becomes flesh. He becomes a true man, to bring grace and truth to our land. He ascends to heaven with his glorious resurrection. He descended as true God, has become a true man, as a true man, transformed into light and into spirit, he ascends to heaven, bringing with him into heaven, in his body, the whole creation of the Father. This is the prodigy that has been accomplished in Him. In Him, today and for eternity all creation is in God, it is also his essence, being the true essence of Christ because it is his body, his true and mystical body.

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. What came to be through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race; the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. A man named John was sent from God. He came for testimony, to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came to be through him, but the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, but his own people did not accept him. But to those who did accept him he gave power to become children of God, to those who believe in his name, who were born not by natural generation nor by human choice nor by a man's decision but of God. And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth. John testified to him and cried out, saying, "This was he of whom I said, 'The one who is coming after me ranks ahead of me because he existed before me.'" From his fullness we have all received, grace in place of grace, because while the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. The only Son, God, who is at the Father's side, has revealed him (Jn 1,1-18).*

The salvation of the people is not in the serpent. It is in the Word of God. Whoever believes in the Word, looks at the serpent, gets to stay alive, otherwise he is in death.

*From Mount Hor they set out on the Red Sea road, to by-pass the land of Edom. But with their patience worn out by the journey, the people complained against God and Moses, "Why have you brought us up from Egypt to die in this desert, where there is no food or water? We are disgusted with this wretched food!" In punishment the Lord sent among the people saraph serpents, which bit the people so that many of them died. Then the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned in complaining against the Lord and you. Pray the Lord to take the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people, and the Lord said to Moses, "Make a saraph and mount it on a pole, and if anyone who has been bitten looks at it, he will recover." Moses accordingly made a bronze serpent and mounted it on a pole, and whenever anyone who had been bitten by a serpent looked at the bronze serpent, he recovered (Num 21,4-9).*

With Jesus everything is different. Salvation is in Him, with Him, for Him, because He is grace and truth and all life must be drawn in Him. One draws life by becoming part of Him, through faith in the Word and the Holy Spirit that in baptism makes us his body, his life. But all this happens with faith in His Word and in His Gospel.

*No one has gone up to heaven except the one who has come down from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life." For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.*

Being Christ alone constituted by God the life of all humanity, whoever believes in Him, becomes one with Him and enters into life. Whoever remains outside of him remains in his death.

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

# Woman, behold, your son.

# Heb 5,7-9; Ps 30; Jn 19,25-27

### 15 SEPTEMBER

Abraham's pain is great. For his pain, fruit of immediate obedience, the Lord promises him to bless all the tribes of the earth in his descent.

*Sometime after these events, God put Abraham to the test. He called to him, "Abraham!" "Ready!" he replied. Then God said: "Take your son Isaac, your only one, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah. There you shall offer him up as a holocaust on a height that I will point out to you." Early the next morning Abraham saddled his donkey, took with him his son Isaac, and two of his servants as well, and with the wood that he had cut for the holocaust, set out for the place of which God had told him. When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. Next he tied up his son Isaac, and put him on top of the wood on the altar. Then he reached out and took the knife to slaughter his son. But the Lord's messenger called to him from heaven, "Abraham, Abraham!" "Yes, Lord," he answered. "Do not lay your hand on the boy," said the messenger. "Do not do the least thing to him. I know now how devoted you are to God, since you did not withhold from me your own beloved son." As Abraham looked about, he spied a ram caught by its horns in the thicket. So he went and took the ram and offered it up as a holocaust in place of his son. Abraham named the site Yahweh-yireh; hence people now say, "On the mountain the Lord will see." Again the Lord's messenger called to Abraham from heaven and said: "I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you acted as you did in not withholding from me your beloved son, I will bless you abundantly and make your descendants as countless as the stars of the sky and the sands of the seashore; your descendants shall take possession of the gates of their enemies, and in your descendants all the nations of the earth shall find blessing - all this because you obeyed my command'' (Gen 22,1-18).*

Jerusalem is in great suffering for the death of her children. This pain will have as an effect the repentance and returning to it of all the exiles in Babylon.

*Look, O Lord, upon her misery, for the enemy has triumphed! The foe stretched out his hand to all her treasures; She has seen those nations enter her sanctuary Whom you forbade to come into your assembly. All her people groan, searching for bread; They give their treasures for food, to retain the breath of life. "Look O Lord, and see how worthless I have become! "Come, all you who pass by the way, look and see Whether there is any suffering like my suffering, which has been dealt me When the Lord afflicted me on the day of his blazing wrath. "From on high he sent fire down into my very frame; He spread a net for my feet, and overthrew me. He left me desolate, in pain all the day. "He has kept watch over my sins; by his hand they have been plaited: They have settled about my neck, he has brought my strength to its knees; The Lord has delivered me into their grip, I am unable to rise. "All the mighty ones in my midst the Lord has cast away; He summoned an army against me to crush my young men; The Lord has trodden in the wine press virgin daughter Judah. "At this I weep, my eyes run with tears: Far from me are all who could console me, any who might revive me; My sons were reduced to silence when the enemy prevailed" (Lam 1, 9-16).*

The pain of the Virgin Mary is perfect. There is nothing missing to it. The Lord asks her to offer Her Son on Golgotha from the cross. Mary obeys more than Abraham and suffers more than Jerusalem. What is the result of this pain? The Lord constitutes her the Mother of humanity regenerated by water and the Holy Spirit. She is the Mother of all the children of God. Since every man is called to let himself be made a true child of God, she has on her shoulders the solicitude of salvation for every man. Hers is a love of suffering and solicitude.

*Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.*

To live well the mystery of her universal maternity, the Virgin asks for help to every son. She asks him to remind, announce and testify to the Gospel, the Word, so that those who are not children become it and those who are already lost children, away, misplaced, become obedient, devoted children, so that she can present them to Christ Jesus.

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

# Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord...'?

# 1Tm 1,15-17; Ps 112,1-7; Lk 6,43-49.

### 16 SEPTEMBER

God wants in his faithful heart and mouth to be one thing and never two. The prophet Malachi reveals the existence of an unbridgeable distance between word, worship and heart. There is the word, there is worship and the heart is lacking. Without the heart word and worship are false. They are just a pure lie. God does not need words and worship without heart. It is better to close his temple. Thus at least the illusion of serving the Lord is taken away, while in truth only sin is served. It is as if the Lord said to us, *"Why do you celebrate me sacrilegious and vain Eucharists? Why is every other sacrament received with the body and not with the heart? Why are your festivals and solemnities lived without any conversion?"*

*A son honours his father, and a servant fears his master; If then I am a father, where is the honour due to me? And if I am a master, where is the reverence due to me? -  So says the Lord of hosts to you, O priests, who despise his name. But you ask, "How have we despised your name?" By offering polluted food on my altar! Then you ask, "How have we polluted it?" By saying the table of the Lord may be slighted! When you offer a blind animal for sacrifice, is this not evil? When you offer the lame or the sick, is it not evil? Present it to your governor; see if he will accept it, or welcome you, says the Lord of hosts. So now if you implore God for mercy on us, when you have done the like Will he welcome any of you? says the Lord of hosts. Oh, that one among you would shut the temple gates to keep you from kindling fire on my altar in vain! I have no pleasure in you, says the Lord of hosts; neither will I accept any sacrifice from your hands, For from the rising of the sun, even to its setting, my name is great among the nations; And everywhere they bring sacrifice to my name, and a pure offering; For great is my name among the nations, says the Lord of hosts. But you behave profanely toward me by thinking the Lord’s table and its offering may be polluted, and its food slighted. You also say, "What a burden!" and you scorn it, says the Lord of hosts; You bring in what you seize, or the lame, or the sick; yes, you bring it as a sacrifice. Shall I accept it from your hands? says the Lord. Cursed is the deceiver, who has in his flock a male, but under his vow sacrifices to the Lord a gelding; For a great King am I, says the Lord of hosts, and my name will be feared among the nations (Mal 1,6-14).*

Jesus reminds his disciples that it is easy to reduce his Gospel to a simple human word if the heart is not transformed from the truth that is in it. It is always possible to say the Word but not to live its content. It is always easy to celebrate the Word, but without the Spirit lurking in it and that fills it with eternal life. Even the sacraments of his salvation can be celebrated, but without the heart, the soul, the spirit and the will to conform our lives to the grace that through them and in them is received. Nobody is immune from this danger. Building a gorgeous cult apparatus is something that is always feasible and in fact it is often accomplished. Building your own life in Christ, according to the truth of his Word and his Law, is not easy. Many are those who pull back, belonging to religion only with the body, but without the soul.

*"A good tree does not bear rotten fruit, nor does a rotten tree bear good fruit. For every tree is known by its own fruit. For people do not pick figs from thorn bushes, nor do they gather grapes from brambles. A good person out of the store of goodness in his heart produces good, but an evil person out of a store of evil produces evil; for from the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks. "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' but not do what I command? I will show you what someone is like who comes to me, listens to my words, and acts on them. That one is like a person building a house, who dug deeply and laid the foundation on rock; when the flood came, the river burst against that house but could not shake it because it had been well built. But the one who listens and does not act is like a person who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the river burst against it, it collapsed at once and was completely destroyed."*

If we do not make of the truth that is in the Word our daily nourishment, never will we be able to withstand the fury of temptation that beats down on our lives. Evil will overpower us. Idolatry will suffocate us. Immorality will overwhelm us like a swollen river.

Virgin Mary, Mother of Redemption, Angels, saints, make us truth in the Word.

# But seventy-seven times

# Sir 27,33-28,9; Ps 102,1-4.9-12; Rm 14,7-9; Mt 18,21-35.

### 17 SEPTEMBER – XXIV SUNDAY O.T.

After the first sin, evil became an almost invincible force and man was abandoned to it, losing the conscience of good and followed the instinct and the yearning of evil. Lamec introduces polygamy and unlimited revenge for nothing in the world.

*Lamech said to his wives: "Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; wives of Lamech, listen to my utterance: I have killed a man for wounding me, a boy for bruising me. If Cain is avenged sevenfold, then Lamech seventy-sevenfold" (Gen 4,23-24).*

The Lord intervenes with his Law and again sets a limit on instinct and the craving of evil and revenge that is in man. No one will have to retaliate by surpassing the entity of the evil received. A bruise for a bruise, a tooth for a tooth and one eye for an eye.

*"When men have a fight and hurt a pregnant woman, so that she suffers a miscarriage, but no further injury, the guilty one shall be fined as much as the woman's husband demands of him, and he shall pay in the presence of the judges. But if injury ensues, you shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe. "When a man strikes his male or female slave in the eye and destroys the use of the eye, he shall let the slave go free in compensation for the eye. If he knocks out a tooth of his male or female slave, he shall let the slave go free in compensation for the tooth (Ex 21,1-27).*

Jesus also abolishes the *"right revenge"* limit. To the wicked one has to surrender in everything. He hits you, let yourself be hit. He nails you on the cross, you let yourself be nailed. He strips you of your own, you let yourself be stripped. He forces you into something, you will allow him to do double.

*"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 (Mt 5,38-42).*

Not only does Jesus abolish the ancient law of vengeance, but also writes one for forgiveness. If you want to be forgiven by the Father, you must always forgive. Do you get a wrong? Always forgive and you will always be forgiven. You do not forgive and you will not be forgiven.

*Then Peter approaching asked him, "Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive him? As many as seven times?" Jesus answered, "I say to you, not seven times but seventy-seven times. That is why the kingdom of heaven may be likened to a king who decided to settle accounts with his servants. When he began the accounting, a debtor was brought before him who owed him a huge amount. Since he had no way of paying it back, his master ordered him to be sold, along with his wife, his children, and all his property, in payment of the debt. At that, the servant fell down, did him homage, and said, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back in full.' Moved with compassion the master of that servant let him go and forgave him the loan.*

*When that servant had left, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a much smaller amount. He seized him and started to choke him, demanding, 'Pay back what you owe.' Falling to his knees, his fellow servant begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.' But he refused. Instead, he had him put in prison until he paid back the debt. Now when his fellow servants saw what had happened, they were deeply disturbed, and went to their master and reported the whole affair. His master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you your entire debt because you begged me to. Should you not have had pity on your fellow servant, as I had pity on you?' Then in anger his master handed him over to the torturers until he should pay back the whole debt. So will my heavenly Father do to you, unless each of you forgives his brother from his heart."*

Jesus frees man from all obligations to others. The obligations of the Gospel are only with our Father who is in heaven. For the brother's love life is offered for his conversion, but not forgiveness. Forgiveness is compulsory for those who want to be forgiven. Just as it is for alms. It is compulsory for those who want good from God.

Virgin Mary, Mother of Redemption, Angels, Saints make us live the whole Gospel.

# Lord, do not trouble yourself

# 1Tm 2,1-8; Ps 27,2.7-9; Lk 7,1-10.

### 18 SEPTEMBER

In Scripture there are two faiths in the Word. The first faith is that of Noah, Abraham and Jacob. God says a Word. They believe in what God has said. They obey the Word listened. The second faith is in the Word spoken by the man that works, creates and gives birth to what is commanded by it. This faith is born with Moses. All the plagues of Egypt are the fruit of a word spoken with faith by Moses. The opening of the Red Sea is also the fruit of this faith. For it man is in all like God. Did not this create all the visible and invisible universe only with his omnipotent word? According to the first story, does not even man come from this same Word of God? Jesus wants every one of his disciples to have this faith in the word he says. Other times he also attaches this faith to prayer. One prays, orders and gives the command.

*The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!”**And the Lord said, “If you had faith like a mustard seed, you would say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and be planted in the sea’; and it would obey you* *(Lk 17.4-6). Then the disciples approached Jesus in private and said, "Why could we not drive it out?" He said to them, "Because of your little faith. Amen, I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you" (Mt 17,19-20). When he was going back to the city in the morning, he was hungry. Seeing a fig tree by the road, he went over to it, but found nothing on it except leaves. And he said to it, "May no fruit ever come from you again." And immediately the fig tree withered. When the disciples saw this, they were amazed and said, "How was it that the fig tree withered immediately?" Jesus said to them in reply, "Amen, I say to you, if you have faith and do not waver, not only will you do what has been done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,' it will be done. Whatever you ask for in prayer with faith, you will receive" (Mt 21,18-22).*

The centurion recognizes that Jesus is a person with the Word of all means. It suffices that he says one word and what is ordered in it is done instantly. However, there is a great difference between the word of command of the centurion and that of Jesus. The centurion can only command men. Jesus cannot command men. He can only teach men. He can enlighten, advise and explain men the mysteries of the kingdom, but cannot impose any order. *"If you want... do this and you will live!"* He can command the unclean spirits and all the elements of the creation of his Father. Every Word he speaks is heard by creation and it is given immediate obedience. He says and things respond instantly, with no empty spaces of time.

*When he had finished all his words to the people, he entered Capernaum. A centurion there had a slave who was ill and about to die, and he was valuable to him. When he heard about Jesus, he sent elders of the Jews to him, asking him to come and save the life of his slave. They approached Jesus and strongly urged him to come, saying, "He deserves to have you do this for him, for he loves our nation and he built the synagogue for us." And Jesus went with them, but when he was only a short distance from the house, the centurion sent friends to tell him, "Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you enter under my roof. Therefore, I did not consider myself worthy to come to you; but say the word and let my servant be healed. For I too am a person subject to authority, with soldiers subject to me. And I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come here,' and he comes; and to my slave, 'Do this,' and he does it." When Jesus heard this he was amazed at him and, turning, said to the crowd following him, "I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith." When the messengers returned to the house, they found the slave in good health.*

The centurion is a wise man and also knows how to infer. If Jesus can command creation - no man can do it, not even his Emperor who is in Rome - then he is infinitely greater than all the great ones on earth. He is beyond the humanly thinkable. He belongs to divinity. He is God. If he is God, who is he to be able to receive him in his home? He is the lowermost and Jesus the most high! A quite high wisdom his, is! Intelligence, rationality are ways of faith. Today these ways have like disappeared!

Virgin Mary, Mother of Redemption, Angels, Saints, make us of very pure faith.

# A great prophet has arisen in our midst

# 1Tm 3,1-13; Ps 100,13ab.5.6; Lk 7,11-17.

### 19 SEPTEMBER

Every disciple of the Lord, for him to be believed in the word he says, he must necessarily be seen by men as a true man of God. Jesus does not give miracles as a rule or mode for this knowledge to occur. He shows them a way that everyone can run through: the path of obedience to his word, to transform their lives into love, but love lived according to his example.

*Before the feast of Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to pass from this world to the Father. He loved his own in the world and he loved them to the end. he rose from supper and took off his outer garments. He took a towel and tied it around his waist.  Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and dry them with the towel around his waist. So when he had washed their feet (and) put his garments back on and reclined at table again, he said to them, "Do you realize what I have done for you? You call me 'teacher' and 'master,' and rightly so, for indeed I am. If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet. I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do. I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (Cf. Jn 13,1-35).*

Saint Paul gives the Corinthians as a sign of their belonging to God, not the exaltation that arises from charismas, but humility that produces great charity.

*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 (1Cor 13,1-7).*

In the Gospel Jesus is revealed and manifested as a true Prophet of the living God, doing works greater than those done by prophets. The modes of implementation, too, attest to his superiority and grandeur. From the works one must confess that God is in Christ and Christ in God. Moses had some shortcomings in faith. Elias proved to be tired. He succeeded by sweating to resurrect the son of the Sarepta widow. All the great ancients had moments of great faith and moments of little faith. On the contrary, Jesus, was very perfect on the cross. He also ruled the cross with fullness of light.

*Soon afterward he journeyed to a city called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd accompanied him. As he drew near to the gate of the city, a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. A large crowd from the city was with her. When the Lord saw her, he was moved with pity for her and said to her, "Do not weep." He stepped forward and touched the coffin; at this the bearers halted, and he said, "Young man, I tell you, arise!" The dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. Fear seized them all, and they glorified God, exclaiming, "A great prophet has arisen in our midst," and "God has visited his people." This report about him spread through the whole of Judea and in all the surrounding region.*

If the Christian does not attest with his great love that he is a disciple of Jesus - and he must always attest to it for he loves for obedience to his master - never might he become way for the faith of his brothers. Faith is in God, never in man. To be in God, it is necessary that the Christian always shows to be a true son of God and a true disciple of Christ the Lord. Christian love is not *"anthropological"*, it must necessarily be *"Christological", "theological", "pneumatological,"* and *"evangelical,"* understood as a most pure obedience to the Word of Jesus. That of the Christian must be a love that is born in him from the constant listening of the Holy Spirit which is in his heart.

Virgin Mary, Mother of Redemption, Angels and Saints fill us to the brim with ready obedience.

# We sang a dirge, but you did not weep

# 1Tm 3,14-16; Ps 110,1-6; Lk 7,31-35.

### 20 SEPTEMBER

The insensitivity of a heart to the call of love of his God is the fruit of idolatry, or the creation of a religion that follows instincts, desires, lusts, which is only a grower of vices and of no virtues. When one comes to this limit, which is also the point of no return, the voice of the prophets is no longer needed, there is a need for a revolt of history to makes him become aware that only the true God is the Saviour of man and that salvation is only by listening to his Word. Sometimes Satan's seduction is so powerful that even a historical overturning is not able to convert a heart. The sin that is in it is so powerful and strong that it has reached damnation as it is still alive. It is sin against the Holy Spirit. Revelation reveals to us that one is so engrossed in admiration of evil and reaches to worship the beast as the true God and Lord. There is no more salvation whatever God does. There is no conversion from sin against the Holy Spirit.

*Then I saw a beast come out of the sea with ten horns and seven heads; on its horns were ten diadems, and on its heads blasphemous name (s). The beast I saw was like a leopard, but it had feet like a bear's, and its mouth was like the mouth of a lion. To it the dragon gave its own power and throne, along with great authority. I saw that one of its heads seemed to have been mortally wounded, but this mortal wound was healed. Fascinated, the whole world followed after the beast. They worshiped the dragon because it gave its authority to the beast; they also worshiped the beast and said, "Who can compare with the beast or who can fight against it?" The beast was given a mouth uttering proud boasts and blasphemies, and it was given authority to act for forty-two months. It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling and those who dwell in heaven. It was also allowed to wage war against the holy ones and conquer them, and it was granted authority over every tribe, people, tongue, and nation. All the inhabitants of the earth will worship it, all whose names were not written from the foundation of the world in the book of life, which belongs to the Lamb who was slain. Then I saw another beast come up out of the earth; it had two horns like a lamb's but spoke like a dragon. It wielded all the authority of the first beast in its sight and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose mortal wound had been healed. It performed great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in the sight of everyone. It deceived the inhabitants of the earth with the signs it was allowed to perform in the sight of the first beast, telling them to make an image for the beast who had been wounded by the sword and revived. It was then permitted to breathe life into the beast's image, so that the beast's image could speak and (could) have anyone who did not worship it put to death. It forced all the people, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to be given a stamped image on their right hands or their foreheads, so that no one could buy or sell except one who had the stamped image of the beast's name or the number that stood for its name (Rev 13,1-17).*

John the Baptist comes; he had an austere life. He was accused of being a possessed, a person that one could not listen to. His voice is of the devil and not of God. Jesus comes; he lives a life of daily normality and is accused of being a big eater and a drinker. Not even his voice can be listened. He is a man without any credibility. He is one like everyone else, a son of the people. There is nothing transcendent or divine in him. That is how insensitivity annihilates and destroys two true sources of salvation.

*"Then to what shall I compare the people of this generation? What are they like? They are like children who sit in the marketplace and call to one another, 'We played the flute for you, but you did not dance. We sang a dirge, but you did not weep.' For John the Baptist came neither eating food nor drinking wine, and you said, 'He is possessed by a demon.' The Son of Man came eating and drinking and you said, 'Look, he is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.' But wisdom is vindicated by all her children."*

Adorers of the beast, of Satan and of his falsehood, might never know Jesus as their Saviour and Lord. Idolaters and immoral persons should have the desire for true conversion to open to his Word of truth and eternal light. He might believe in Christ only who is a son of wisdom: he who seeks the Lord with purity of heart.

Virgin Mary, Mother of Redemption, Angels and Saints make us true children of Wisdom.

**SEPTEMBER 2017**

## THIRD DECADE OF SEPTEMBER

# I desire mercy, not sacrifice

# Eph 4,1-7.11-13; Ps 18,2-5; Mt 9,9-13.

### 21 SEPTEMBER

He might only accept Jesus the Lord who has in his heart a great desire for conversion, in returning to God to dwell in his Word. At the time of Hosea, instead Israel lived in worship and not in the Word. But every worship is false if it is not lived in the Word in sigh of a fuller life in the Word. The Word excludes any idolatry and immorality. Cult without the Word and not in view of it, might always coexist with the greatest idolatry, mother of all immorality and impiety. For this reason, through his prophet, the Lord shouts that he wants love and not sacrifice, God's knowledge more than burnt-offerings. He only wants obedience to every Word.

*"Come, let us return to the Lord, For it is he who has rent, but he will heal us; he has struck us, but he will bind our wounds. He will revive us after two days; on the third day he will raise us up, to live in his presence. Let us know, let us strive to know the Lord; as certain as the dawn is his coming, and his judgment shines forth like the light of day! He will come to us like the rain, like spring rain that waters the earth." What can I do with you, Ephraim? What can I do with you, Judah? Your piety is like a morning cloud, like the dew that early passes away. For this reason I smote them through the prophets, I slew them by the words of my mouth; For it is love that I desire, not sacrifice, and knowledge of God rather than holocausts. But they, in their land, violated the covenant; there they were untrue to me. Gilead is a city of evildoers, tracked with blood. As brigands ambush a man, a band of priests slay on the way to Shechem, committing monstrous crime. In the house of Israel I have seen a horrible thing: there harlotry is found in Ephraim, Israel is defiled. For you also, O Judah, a harvest has been appointed (Hos 6,1-11).*

A truth to be shouted at every man demands that it is said that God does not want obedience to the Word of God, but obedience to the Word of yesterday according to the indications of the Word of today and today the Lord speaks through his prophets. It is the Word of the Prophets that reveals to us how to live the Word of yesterday, updated and enlivened by the Word of today. If there is no listening to the prophets, it is already a sign that one does not live the Word of yesterday, for if the heart were in the Word of yesterday, it would certainly enter into the Word of today, which is updating and vivifying in the present of the history of the ancient Word. The disdain of Jesus by the Pharisees attests, indeed, reveals that they are not in the Old Word of God, neither in that of Moses and nor in that of the prophets that came after him. If they were in that Old Word, they would know that the Lord opened the doors of his heart, in conversion and repentance, to every sinner. They would also know that the God of Moses not only pardons, but He himself is the one that invites to accept his forgiveness, his grace, his will of reconciliation and peace. This is the ancient Word of God.

*As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the customs post. He said to him, "Follow me." And he got up and followed him. While he was at table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat with Jesus and his disciples. The Pharisees saw this and said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" He heard this and said, "Those who are well do not need a physician, but the sick do. Go and learn the meaning of the words, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' I did not come to call the righteous but sinners."*

Concerning forgiveness of sins, Jesus does not create anything new and does not bring any news in the people of God. He lives in a holy way what Moses experienced when he sought and obtained forgiveness for his people that became idolatrous. He lives perfectly what Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and all the prophets of the Old Testament experienced. All the old Messengers of the Lord had one word: get converted, repent, the Lord expects you to forgive and readmit you in his holy covenant, to make you his children in the covenant of love and obedience. Whoever does not accept a single prophet of God attests that He is not in the Gospel. The prophets do not change the Gospel, they announce how to live it best in the Holy Spirit today.

Virgin Mary, Mother of Redemption, Angels, Saints, make us listeners of the Prophets.

# Who provided for them out of their resources

# 1Tm 6,2c-12; Ps 48,6-10.17-20; Lk 8,1-3.

### 22 SEPTEMBER

In the Old Testament priests and Levites had been excluded from the inheritance of the earth. Their part was the Lord. The rest of the tribes were legally obligated to their livelihood with the offering of the tenth of every product of the earth. In addition, to priests went a part of the sacrifices of communion and all other free offerings.

*"Each year you shall tithe all the produce that grows in the field you have sown; then in the place which the Lord, your God, chooses as the dwelling place of his name you shall eat in his presence your tithe of the grain, wine and oil, as well as the firstlings of your herd and flock, that you may learn always to fear the Lord, your God. If, however, the journey is too much for you and you are not able to bring your tithe, because the place which the Lord, your God, chooses for the abode of his name is too far for you, considering how the Lord has blessed you, you may exchange the tithe for money and, with the purse of money in hand, go to the place which the Lord, your God, chooses. You may then exchange the money for whatever you desire, oxen or sheep, wine or strong drink, or anything else you would enjoy, and there before the Lord, your God, you shall partake of it and make merry with your family. But do not neglect the Levite who belongs to your community, for he has no share in the heritage with you. "At the end of every third year you shall bring out all the tithes of your produce for that year and deposit them in community stores, that the Levite who has no share in the heritage with you, and also the alien, the orphan and the widow who belong to your community, may come and eat their fill; so that the Lord, your God, may bless you in all that you undertake (Dt 14,22-39).*

Jesus abolishes this ancient law for his disciples. He entrusts his missionaries to the Providence of the Father. He himself lives this pure law of faith. Along with Him and the Twelve there are some wealthy women who serve them with their possessions.

*Afterward he journeyed from one town and village to another, preaching and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. Accompanying him were the Twelve and some women who had been cured of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward Chuza, Susanna, and many others who provided for them out of their resources.*

Paul renounces this law, preferring to work with his hands, so that no one could think of any personal gain or profit in the gospel proclamation. For him the Word deserves this utter gratuitousness. No one else has to think of other things about him. He will only have to see a man that announces the Gospel freely.

*Whoever serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard without eating its produce? Or who shepherds a flock without using some of the milk from the flock? Am I saying this on human authority, or does not the law also speak of these things? It is written in the law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain." Is God concerned about oxen, or is he not really speaking for our sake? It was written for our sake, because the ploughman should plough in hope, and the thresher in hope of receiving a share. If we have sown spiritual seed for you, is it a great thing that we reap a material harvest from you? If others share this rightful claim on you, do not we still more? Yet we have not used this right. On the contrary, we endure everything so as not to place an obstacle to the gospel of Christ. Do you not know that those who perform the temple services eat (what) belongs to the temple, and those who minister at the altar share in the sacrificial offerings? In the same way, the Lord ordered that those who preach the gospel should live by the gospel. I have not used any of these rights, however, nor do I write this that it be done so in my case. I would rather die. Certainly no one is going to nullify my boast. If I preach the gospel, this is no reason for me to boast, for an obligation has been imposed on me, and woe to me if I do not preach it! If I do so willingly, I have a recompense, but if unwillingly, then I have been entrusted with a stewardship. What then is my recompense? That, when I preach, I offer the gospel free of charge so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel (1Cor 9,7-18).*

Paul's love for the Gospel is truly great. he gives all his life to the Word without asking for anything in return, not even a piece of bread to support his heart and to have strength to preach the Gospel. Perfect exemplarity in gratuitousness.

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

# A sower went out to sow his seed

# 1Tm 6,13-16; Ps 99,2-5; Lk 8,4-15.

### 23 SEPTEMBER

The kingdom of God is born in the hearts to the extent that the Word of Christ Jesus is sown. Whenever the Church has stopped sowing the true Word of her Master and Lord, to devote herself to other harvesting, there has always been a decline in the edification of the kingdom of God in the world. The parable affirms it with divine clarity: the kingdom of God is born from the Word. The Word is not replaceable with anything else. Charity, love, works of mercy are not directly ordained at the birth of the kingdom of God, but to make the Word of the disciple of Jesus credible. Jesus never replaced miracles with the Word. Signs made faith in him as God's prophet arise. He, known and confessed as a true prophet, proclaimed the Word of his Father. Faith in the announced Word gave birth to the kingdom among men. Today it is important to be very careful. Many are replacing the Word with charitable works. Never will the kingdom of God be born without the gift of the Word, which must always exist. Of course, respecting times, moments, modes and forms, but the Word must always be given to everyone.

There is a second truth emerging from the parable of Jesus. Since it is one *"fourth"* among all sown soils that yields good fruit - road, stony soil, fields full of thorns do not yield any fruit - it is necessary that you always sow to profusion, without ever tiring, so that the *"fourth"* becomes ever greater. One thing is that the one fourth is an acre, another one an hectare, another one a square kilometre and another one a quarter of the whole of humanity. Whoever sows little, collects little or nothing. He could sow that little on the road. But if you sow a lot, you will gather a lot, because certainly the seed will also fall on good soil. For this reason, the Christian must always sow in every heart the good grain of the Word of Jesus. If he sows his thoughts, his theories, his purposes, and projects, it is as if he sowed stones. Never will the kingdom of God be born from stones. It is right then that everyone wondered: *"But what am I sowing? What do I sow? The Word of Jesus or my Word? The Gospel or thoughts of men?"*

*When a large crowd gathered, with people from one town after another journeying to him, he spoke in a parable. "A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path and was trampled, and the birds of the sky ate it up. Some seed fell on rocky ground, and when it grew, it withered for lack of moisture. Some seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew with it and choked it. And some seed fell on good soil, and when it grew, it produced fruit a hundredfold." After saying this, he called out, "Whoever has ears to hear ought to hear." Then his disciples asked him what the meaning of this parable might be. He answered, "Knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of God has been granted to you; but to the rest, they are made known through parables so that 'they may look but not see, and hear but not understand.' "*

*This is the meaning of the parable. The seed is the word of God. Those on the path are the ones who have heard, but the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts that they may not believe and be saved. Those on rocky ground are the ones who, when they hear, receive the word with joy, but they have no root; they believe only for a time and fall away in time of trial. As for the seed that fell among thorns, they are the ones who have heard, but as they go along, they are choked by the anxieties and riches and pleasures of life, and they fail to produce mature fruit. But as for the seed that fell on rich soil, they are the ones who, when they have heard the word, embrace it with a generous and good heart, and bear fruit through perseverance.*

A third truth must be reaffirmed with the strength and energy of the Holy Spirit. The Word must be sown from the Word, from the purest faith in it, from the transformation it has made in our lives. We are not only the announcers of the Gospel, but also the witnesses of its truth. Without witness never might the Word be said. If it produces no fruit in us, can we hope that it will be fruitful in others? But if the Word has not produced any fruit in us, we do not even say it, because it is from our heart that it must always be drawn. If it is nonexistent in the heart, the one drawn from books is an empty word.

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

# Are you envious because I am generous?

# Is 55,6-9; Ps 144,2-3.8-9.17-18; Phil 1,20c-24.27a; Mt 20,1-16.

### 24 SEPTEMBER – XXV SUNDAY O.T.

Workers of the first work forget an essential truth. Their call is not a right. It is most pure grace. It is a gift of the Lord's great mercy. God wanted them to live without *"desperation"* in their hearts from very early in the morning: *"Will anyone that takes us with him pass today, so at least even this evening we can feed our children?"* Staying a day on the square waiting for someone creates anguish, loss of hope and takes the breath off the heart. Then finally comes the call and it is joy, life. One resurrects. Work is a real gift of life. If we all understood this truth, we would have another relationship with God. We will always thank him and always ask him to keep it for us in his great mercy.

When one forgets that everything is a gift, then the heart becomes corrupt, becomes also wicked, bad, dishonest, it murmurs, speaks evil, says false testimony and commits all kinds of crimes with the Lord. He did not realize that every gift of God must be jealously guarded and one's life is consecrated to it because life is born of the gift. Today, however, man has become a non Christian and does not see from the faith. He only thinks from his heart and sees only rights. He does not know the duties inherent in the gift and does not even guard the gift with love anymore, in the great obedience to the duties that come from the gift. It is necessary to put all the truth of God and of Christ in many hearts, if we want our society to breathe again in justice, holiness, mutual love, respect for others and great charity.

*"The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out at dawn to hire labourers for his vineyard. After agreeing with them for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. Going out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and he said to them, 'You too go into my vineyard, and I will give you what is just.' So they went off. (And) he went out again around noon, and around three o'clock, and did likewise. Going out about five o'clock, he found others standing around, and said to them, 'Why do you stand here idle all day?' They answered, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You too go into my vineyard.' When it was evening the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Summon the labourers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and ending with the first.' When those who had started about five o'clock came, each received the usual daily wage. So when the first came, they thought that they would receive more, but each of them also got the usual wage. And on receiving it they grumbled against the landowner, saying, 'These last ones worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us, who bore the day's burden and the heat.' He said to one of them in reply, 'My friend, I am not cheating you. Did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? Take what is yours and go. What if I wish to give this last one the same as you? (Or) am I not free to do as I wish with my own money? Are you envious because I am generous?' Thus, the last will be first, and the first will be last."*

What does Jesus want to teach us through this holy Word? First of all, respect for the divine will, which might never be conditioned, enslaved, subjected to the desires of the human heart. Second, our God wants hearts full of gratitude both for the good received and for the good done to others. No man must measure God's action from the rules of his heart, often envious, foolish, insincere and incapable of loving the brother as itself. The ways of God are mysterious, and no one will ever understand anything of them, unless the Holy Spirit does not powerfully dwell in him. The Lord can give his kingdom to a man even at the last instant of his life and all of Heaven rejoices over this gift. A pure heart sees the grace of God and rejoices. An envious heart sees good and is saddened. This is the sign that one is not kingdom of God. He is still in the flesh and thinks and acts according to the flesh. Who begins from the principle that all is grace and this is governed by divine and eternal wisdom, will see himself in grace and from grace and with this vision he will also contemplate the others and will rejoice. He will bless the Lord for he has granted others the same grace he has been given. Joy for every grace of the brethren reveals us that we are the true kingdom of God.

Virgin Mary, Mother of Redemption, Angels and Saints give us the joy of always loving.

# To anyone who has, more will be given

# Ezd 1,1-6; Ps 125,1-6; Lk 8,16-18.

### 25 SEPTEMBER

Jesus asks his disciples to lead a life full of all virtues, in which there is nothing less honest, dishonest, so as to have to hide either all or part of it. A lamp is lit up to illuminate the entire home. The Christian lights his life forever from the life of Christ and with the life of Christ in him he illuminates the world. He must be an always visible light, a never-hidden light and an always exposed light. St. Peter and St. Paul tell each their own way for this to always happen.

*His divine power has bestowed on us everything that makes for life and devotion, through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and power. Through these, he has bestowed on us the precious and very great promises, so that through them you may come to share in the divine nature, after escaping from the corruption that is in the world because of evil desire. For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, virtue with knowledge, knowledge with self-control, self-control with endurance, endurance with devotion, devotion with mutual affection, mutual affection with love. If these are yours and increase in abundance, they will keep you from being idle or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Anyone who lacks them is blind and short sighted, forgetful of the cleansing of his past sins. Therefore, brothers, be all the more eager to make your call and election firm, for, in doing so, you will never stumble. For, in this way, entry into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and saviour Jesus Christ will be richly provided for you (2Pt 1,3-11).*

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

If you fail in this commitment, you soon become darkness, you abandon the Gospel, you lose the true faith in Christ, you are delivered to immorality, you live a life by being abandoned to vice and sin. You are no longer light in the Lord, you lose even the little natural honesty you possessed before having become believers. Before we knew Christ a little good was in our nature. After having known Christ and leaving him, you return under the custody of the prince of the world, the condition, Jesus says, becomes seven times worse. Darkness is very dense. We had known the true light, we also lost the light that still was in our nature. No word is said on this *"worse"* condition, but it is so, No Word of Jesus will ever fall into the void and He says it with clarity: *"It will be taken away even what he believes to have"*. He denied the Just and the Saint? He will be completely wrapped in darkness.

*"No one who lights a lamp conceals it with a vessel or sets it under a bed; rather, he places it on a lamp stand so that those who enter may see the light. For there is nothing hidden that will not become visible, and nothing secret that will not be known and come to light. Take care, then, how you hear. To anyone who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he seems to have will be taken away."*

But whoever remains in the light and grows in it, the light in him will become ever greater. The Lord will add to him light upon light and grace upon grace, because he believed, obeyed, obeys, grew in wisdom and grace and is growing in all virtues. Let no one be deluded to stay in the light, if he abandons the way of life embraced and known by him. He falls into the darkness of death from which it becomes difficult to go back. That is why we must put all effort to remain light.

Virgin Mary, Mother of Redemption, Angels and Saints make us intense light in Christ.

# My mother and my brothers are those who hear

# Ezd 6,7-8.12b.14-20; Ps 121,1-5; Lk 8,19-21.

### 26 SEPTEMBER

In eternity and in time, as true Son, Jesus is always from the will of the Father. He is his essence, revealed to the Mother already at the age of twelve, in the Temple of Jerusalem.

*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. He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them; and his mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus advanced (in) wisdom and age and favour before God and man (Lk 2,41-52).*

The same obedience he asks of those whom He calls to be missionaries of his Gospel in the world. Times, modes, places will be for them from the will of his Father.

*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 plough and looks to what was left behind is fit for the kingdom of God" (Lk 9,57-62).*

Even the times of his moving from place to place are for Jesus from the will of the Father. He does not go to Jerusalem for the invitation of his brothers, but only at the command of the Father. If the Father does not order, He does not move. The Father orders and He leaves.

*But the Jewish feast of Tabernacles was near. So his brothers said to him, "Leave here and go to Judea, so that your disciples also may see the works you are doing. No one works in secret if he wants to be known publicly. If you do these things, manifest yourself to the world." For his brothers did not believe in him. So Jesus said to them, "My time is not yet here, but the time is always right for you. The world cannot hate you, but it hates me, because I testify to it that its works are evil. You go up to the feast. I am not going up to this feast, because my time has not yet been fulfilled." After he had said this, he stayed on in Galilee (Jn 7,2-9).*

The Letter to the Jews reveals that Jesus' life, in his holy body, was all an offering to the Father, a true holocaust, which was then consumed in full on the Cross.

*First he says, "Sacrifices and offerings, holocausts and sin offerings, you neither desired nor delighted in." These are offered according to the law. Then he says, "Behold, I come to do your will." He takes away the first to establish the second. By this "will," we have been consecrated through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all (Heb 10,8-10).*

He recognizes as his only one who does the will of the Father. Mary is his Mother because she is always obedient to God. He cannot say so of his relatives. He knows that they do not believe in his mission. They do not know him and he cannot know them.

*Then his mother and his brothers came to him but were unable to join him because of the crowd. He was told, "Your mother and your brothers are standing outside and they wish to see you." He said to them in reply, "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and act on it."*

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

# And he sent them to proclaim the kingdom of God

# Ezd 9,5-9; Ps Tb 13,2-5; Lk 9,1-6.

### 27 SEPTEMBER

Saint Paul has understood well how the Kingdom of God must be proclaimed: becoming everything to everyone.

*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. Thus I do not run aimlessly; I do not fight as if I were shadowboxing. No, I drive my body and train it*, *after having preached to others, for fear that, I myself should be disqualified (1Cor 9,19-27).*

Every disciple of Jesus is called to announce the kingdom of God. He will announce it by showing it accomplished in him. If it is not accomplished in him, his announcement is vain.

*Therefore, put on the armour of God, that you may be able to resist on the evil day and, having done everything, to hold your ground. So stand fast with your loins girded in truth, clothed with righteousness as a breastplate, and your feet shod in readiness for the gospel of peace. In all circumstances, hold faith as a shield, to quench all (the) flaming arrows of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. With all prayer and supplication, pray at every opportunity in the Spirit. To that end, be watchful with all perseverance and supplication for all the holy ones and also for me, that speech may be given me to open my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel for which I am an ambassador in chains, so that I may have the courage to speak as I must (Eph 6,10-20).*

Even to Timothy, his faithful disciple, St. Paul teaches how the kingdom is built: consecrating all his life to it and not dealing with anything else. He is for the Gospel.

*Bear your share of hardship along with me like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. To satisfy the one who recruited him, a soldier does not become entangled in the business affairs of life. Similarly, an athlete cannot receive the winner's crown except by competing according to the rules. The hardworking farmer ought to have the first share of the crop. Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything. Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, a descendant of David: such is my gospel, for which I am suffering, even to the point of chains, like a criminal. But the word of God is not chained. Therefore, I bear with everything for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, together with eternal glory. This saying is trustworthy: If we have died with him we shall also live with him; if we persevere we shall also reign with him. But if we deny him he will deny us. If we are unfaithful he remains faithful, for he cannot deny himself. Remind people of these things and charge them before God to stop disputing about words. This serves no useful purpose since it harms those who listen. Be eager to present yourself as acceptable to God, a workman who causes no disgrace, imparting the word of truth without deviation. Avoid profane, idle talk, for such people will become more and more godless (2Tm 2,3-16).*

In the Holy Spirit, according to his particular ministry and charisma, everyone must know what the modes and ways so that he too is a good builder of the kingdom are. Now the disciples receive the directions from Jesus. Tomorrow they will receive them from the Holy Spirit. By placing themselves in the school of the Spirit, they will always know how to bring the Gospel.

*He summoned the Twelve and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal (the sick). He said to them, "Take nothing for the journey, neither walking stick, nor sack, nor food, nor money, and let no one take a second tunic. Whatever house you enter, stay there and leave from there. And as for those who do not welcome you, when you leave that town, shake the dust from your feet in testimony against them." Then they set out and went from village to village proclaiming the good news and curing diseases everywhere.*

Virgin Mary, Mother of Redemption, Angels, Saints, make us builders of the kingdom.

# And he kept trying to see him

# Hag 1,1-8; Ps 149,1-6a.9b; Lk 9,7-9.

### 28 SEPTEMBER

Herod is a king from whom you have to stay away. He does not have the government of himself. He is dominated by his lust. He cannot even rule the kingdom and he is entirely dominated by Herodias. An immoral dance was enough for John the Baptist to be deprived of his head. For Jesus this king is a fox. He knows how to cure his interests with cunning and shrewdness. If he were to sell the kingdom for his personal good, he would do it.

*At that time some Pharisees came to him and said, "Go away, leave this area because Herod wants to kill you." He replied, "Go and tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and I perform healings today and tomorrow, and on the third day I accomplish my purpose. Yet I must continue on my way today, tomorrow, and the following day, for it is impossible that a prophet should die outside of Jerusalem' (Lk 13,31-33).*

In the Gospel according to Mark Jesus asks his disciples to watch from the yeast of the Pharisees and Herod's yeast! That of the Pharisees is a yeast of hypocrisy and of seeking personal glory. That of Herod is one of concupiscence, cunning, shrewdness, abrogation of the rights of men, total absence of fear of the Lord and great foolishness.

*They had forgotten to bring bread, and they had only one loaf with them in the boat. He enjoined them, "Watch out, guard against the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod." They concluded among themselves that it was because they had no bread. When he became aware of this he said to them, "Why do you conclude that it is because you have no bread? Do you not yet understand or comprehend? Are your hearts hardened? Do you have eyes and not see, ears and not hear? And do you not remember, when I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many wicker baskets full of fragments you picked up?" They answered him, "Twelve." "When I broke the seven loaves for the four thousand, how many full baskets of fragments did you pick up?" They answered (him), "Seven." He said to them, "Do you still not understand?" (Mk 8,14-21).*

God never leaves unheard the wishes of men. He always grants them in due time. Herod tried to see Jesus but never succeeded. The heavenly Father sends him to him so that he takes a decision in truth and justice. Instead, as always, he thought he only about caring for his interests. since Jesus did not satisfy his curiosity of seeing a miracle, shirking all responsibility he sent him back to Pilate. In this way he also became seriously guilty of Jesus' death.

*Then the whole assembly of them arose and brought him before Pilate. They brought charges against him, saying, "We found this man misleading our people; he opposes the payment of taxes to Caesar and maintains that he is the Messiah, a king." Pilate asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" He said to him in reply, "You say so." Pilate then addressed the chief priests and the crowds, "I find this man not guilty." But they were adamant and said, "He is inciting the people with his teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee where he began even to here." On hearing this Pilate asked if the man was a Galilean; and upon learning that he was under Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod who was in Jerusalem at that time. Herod was very glad to see Jesus; he had been wanting to see him for a long time, for he had heard about him and had been hoping to see him perform some sign. He questioned him at length, but he gave him no answer. The chief priests and scribes, meanwhile, stood by accusing him harshly. (Even) Herod and his soldiers treated him contemptuously and mocked him, and after clothing him in resplendent garb, he sent him back to Pilate. Herod and Pilate became friends that very day, even though they had been enemies formerly (Lk 23,1-12).*

There are many thoughts that navigate in minds on Jesus. None of them corresponds to truth. Herod says one thing, "John was beheaded and of course Jesus cannot be the risen Precursor. Who must then Jesus be? To the king the mystery remains.

*Herod the tetrarch heard about all that was happening, and he was greatly perplexed because some were saying, "John has been raised from the dead"; others were saying, "Elijah has appeared"; still others, "One of the ancient prophets has arisen." But Herod said, "John I beheaded. Who then is this about whom I hear such things?" And he kept trying to see him.*

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

# You will see the sky opened

# Dn 7,9-10.13-14; or: Rev 12,7-12a; Ps 137,1-5; Jn 1,47-51.

### 29 SEPTEMBER

In the revelation of his universal mediation between heaven and earth, Jesus uses an ancient event narrated by Genesis and that concerns Jacob, the son of Isaac.

*Jacob departed from Beer-sheba and proceeded toward Haran. When he came upon a certain shrine, as the sun had already set, he stopped there for the night. Taking one of the stones at the shrine, he put it under his head and lay down to sleep at that spot. Then he had a dream: a stairway rested on the ground, with its top reaching to the heavens; and God's messengers were going up and down on it. And there was the Lord standing beside him and saying: "I, the Lord, am the God of your forefather Abraham and the God of Isaac; the land on which you are lying I will give to you and your descendants. These shall be as plentiful as the dust of the earth, and through them you shall spread out east and west, north and south. In you and your descendants all the nations of the earth shall find blessing. Know that I am with you; I will protect you wherever you go, and bring you back to this land. I will never leave you until I have done what I promised you." When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he exclaimed, "Truly, the Lord is in this spot, although I did not know it!" In solemn wonder he cried out: "How awesome is this shrine! This is nothing else but an abode of God, and that is the gateway to heaven!" Early the next morning Jacob took the stone that he had put under his head, set it up as a memorial stone, and poured oil on top of it. He called that site Bethel, whereas the former name of the town had been Luz. Jacob then made this vow: "If God remains with me, to protect me on this journey I am making and to give me enough bread to eat and clothing to wear, and I come back safe to my father's house, the Lord shall be my God. This stone that I have set up as a memorial stone shall be God's abode. Of everything you give me, I will faithfully return a tenth part to you" (Gen 28,10-22).*

Nathanael confessed that Jesus is the Son of God, the King of Israel, that is, the Messiah to come. If for a word spoken by the Master, such a true and perfect confession has been uttered, what will all say when they will see him as the true ladder seen in Jacob's dream and the angels of God descend and ascend on him? Angels are messengers that from heaven come to bring messages to men, but also that return to the Lord bringing the thousand voices of men in expectation. Jesus does not abolish the mediation of the Angels. It will be made in Him, with Him, for Him. His is the universal mediation. No Angel ascends to God if not through Him and no one descends except for Him. This truth is the essence of our faith in Christ Jesus the Saviour.

*Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, "Here is a true Israelite. There is no duplicity in him." Nathanael said to him, "How do you know me?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, I saw you under the fig tree." Nathanael answered him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel." Jesus answered and said to him, "Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than this." And he said to him, "Amen, amen, I say to you, you will see the sky opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man"*

The first one who sees the open skies is Stephen and it is for this vision that he accelerates his stoning. He tells us to see Christ Jesus at the right hand of God, attesting that not only is the Messiah risen but also that he sits at the right hand of the Father. Jesus is not a poor man who failed as the Jews wanted people to believe and think of Him.

*But he, filled with the holy Spirit, looked up intently to heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." But they cried out in a loud voice, covered their ears, and rushed upon him together. They threw him out of the city, and began to stone him. The witnesses laid down their cloaks at the feet of a young man named Saul. As they were stoning Stephen, he called out, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he fell to his knees and cried out in a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them"; and when he said this, he fell asleep (At 7,55-60).*

With Jesus, the Ministry of Angels is not abrogated, rather reinforced. They are celestial messengers charged with serving men, serving them Christ Jesus, the grace of the Father, in which every other grace of truth and love is enclosed.

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

# Pay attention to what I am telling you

# Zech 2,5-9.14-15a; Ps Jer 31,10-12b.13; Lk 9,43b-45.

### 30 SEPTEMBER

Pain is the essence of Messiah's life. There are many Psalms that describe in detail the suffering of the Just Persecuted. No one had ever applied these Psalms to the Messiah. However, there is an essential difference between the Psalms and the Prophecy of the Suffering Servant of Isaiah. The former tell of all ill-treatment inflicted on the Righteous. Instead the prophecy reveals the cause of such a great suffering. The Messiah, or the Lord's Servant, will be in indestructible pain because he will take on himself all the blame and punishment of the world. This is his undeniable love. He is burdened with expiation for all mankind.

*See, my servant shall prosper, he shall be raised high and greatly exalted. Even as many were amazed at him -  so marred was his look beyond that of man, and his appearance beyond that of mortals - So shall he startle many nations, because of him kings shall stand speechless; For those who have not been told shall see, those who have not heard shall ponder it. Who would believe what we have heard? To whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? He grew up like a sapling before him, like a shoot from the parched earth; There was in him no stately bearing to make us look at him, nor appearance that would attract us to him. He was spurned and avoided by men, a man of suffering, accustomed to infirmity, One of those from whom men hide their faces, spurned, and we held him in no esteem. Yet it was our infirmities that he bore, our sufferings that he endured, While we thought of him as stricken, as one smitten by God and afflicted. But he was pierced for our offenses, crushed for our sins, Upon him was the chastisement that makes us whole, by his stripes we were healed. We had all gone astray like sheep, each following his own way; But the Lord laid upon him the guilt of us all.*

*Though he was harshly treated, he submitted and opened not his mouth; Like a lamb led to the slaughter or a sheep before the shearers, he was silent and opened not his mouth. Oppressed and condemned, he was taken away, and who would have thought any more of his destiny? When he was cut off from the land of the living, and smitten for the sin of his people, A grave was assigned him among the wicked and a burial place with evildoers, Though he had done no wrong nor spoken any falsehood. (But the Lord was pleased to crush him in infirmity.) If he gives his life as an offering for sin, he shall see his descendants in a long life, and the will of the Lord shall be accomplished through him. Because of his affliction he shall see the light in fullness of days; Through his suffering, my servant shall justify many, and their guilt he shall bear. Therefore I will give him his portion among the great, and he shall divide the spoils with the mighty, Because he surrendered himself to death and was counted among the wicked; And he shall take away the sins of many, and win pardon for their offenses (Is 52,13-53,12).*

The disciples never applied either the Psalms of pain or the Prophecy of the Suffering Servant to the Messiah. For them, the king of Israel can only be a person wrapped in great earthly glory. He will be a conqueror, a liberator and a man of victory. Instead, Jesus wants his disciples to start thinking of him as a man of great defeat. He will be taken by his people and delivered to the pagans. This is his end.

*While they were all amazed at his every deed, he said to his disciples, "Pay attention to what I am telling you. The Son of Man is to be handed over to men." But they did not understand this saying; its meaning was hidden from them so that they should not understand it, and they were afraid to ask him about this saying.*

From this moment on, the Twelve will have to begin to think in a completely new way about the Messiah of the Lord. They must see Jesus as the Delivered, the One put to death, the Crucified and without any earthly glory. He is the son of David, but he is not a new David. In fact, his kingdom is not of this world. It is a heavy truth for the disciples. It is not easily acceptable. There is a need for a radical change of mind. A twist of their thoughts. How does one suddenly move from a Messiah wrapped of glory to a renegade and a delivered to the pagans to be Crucified? Faith has always undergone great ups and downs. But, never one like this.

Virgin Mary, Mother of Redemption, Angels and Saints help us in the swings of faith.