**FEBRUARY 2018**

## FIRST DECADE OF FEBRUARY

## BEGAN TO SEND THEM OUT TWO BY TWO

## 1Kings 2,1-4.10-12; C 1Chr 29,10-12; Mk 6,7-13

**1 FEBRUARY**

In Ancient Scripture there are few examples of people walking together to fulfil a mission of salvation. To Moses the Lord first adds Aaron, then Mary and also Joshua. To Elijah he gives Elisha for a little time. Elisha is almost always accompanied by his servant Giezi. In the Book of Judges Barak sent to fight by the prophetess Deborah against the oppressors of the people of God has demanded that the same prophetess accompanied him. All the others live their mission alone.

*Moses, however, said to the Lord, "If you please, Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past, nor recently, nor now that you have spoken to your servant; but I am slow of speech and tongue." The Lord said to him, "Who gives one man speech and makes another deaf and dumb? Or who gives sight to one and makes another blind? Is it not I, the Lord? Go, then! It is I who will assist you in speaking and will teach you what you are to say." Yet he insisted, "If you please, Lord, send someone else!" Then the Lord became angry with Moses and said, "Have you not your brother, Aaron the Levite? I know that he is an eloquent speaker. Besides, he is now on his way to meet you. When he sees you, his heart will be glad. You are to speak to him, then, and put the words in his mouth. I will assist both you and him in speaking and will teach the two of you what you are to do. He shall speak to the people for you: he shall be your spokesman, and you shall be as God to him. Take this staff in your hand; with it you are to perform the signs" (Ex 4,10-17). "Go, take the road back to the desert near Damascus," the Lord said to him. "When you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael as king of Aram. Then you shall anoint Jehu, son of Nimshi, as king of Israel, and Elisha, son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah, as prophet to succeed you. If anyone escapes the sword of Hazael, Jehu will kill him. If he escapes the sword if Jehu, Elisha will kill him. Yet I will leave seven thousand men in Israel - all those who have not knelt to Baal or kissed him." Elijah set out, and came upon Elisha, son of Shaphat, as he was ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen; he was following the twelfth. Elijah went over to him and threw his cloak over him. Elisha left the oxen, ran after Elijah, and said, "Please, let me kiss my father and mother good-bye, and I will follow you." "Go back!" Elijah answered. "Have I done anything to you?" Elisha left him and, taking the yoke of oxen, slaughtered them; he used the ploughing equipment for fuel to boil their flesh, and gave it to his people to eat. Then he left and followed Elijah as his attendant (1Kings 19,15-21).*

According to the Book of Qoelet, going by two is necessary, so that one is strength for the other. In two they support and encourage one another. One is the courage of the other.

*Two are better than one: they get a good wage for their labour. If the one falls, the other will lift up his companion. Woe to the solitary man! For if he should fall, he has no one to lift him up. So also, if two sleep together, they keep each other warm. How can one alone keep warm? Where a lone man may be overcome, two together can resist. A three-ply cord is not easily broken (Ecl 4,9-12).*

But it is another reason why it is necessary to go by two. The apostles are witnesses of Jesus the Lord. The testimony of one alone has no power of proof. Being two, one makes the other true in the concordant testimony. It is a true guarantee of truth for whoever listens. It's not just one, but it's two. Two witnesses are truth. Two witnesses can also be falsehood. The difference makes life. A poor, humble life, without a search for worldly glory, lived for free, without any personal regard, attests to the truth of the missionary. One who always gives everything for free cannot be false. He cannot want evil. It already does not exploit.

*He summoned the Twelve and began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over unclean spirits. He instructed them to take nothing for the journey but a walking stick - no food, no sack, no money in their belts. They were, however, to wear sandals but not a second tunic. He said to them, "Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave from there. Whatever place does not welcome you or listen to you, leave there and shake the dust off your feet in testimony against them." So they went off and preached repentance. They drove out many demons, and they anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.*

Man must not only must be given the Gospel. It must be testified that it is true Word of salvation. The Word is give by creating a powerful force in testimony.

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

## A LIGHT FOR REVELATION TO THE GENTILES

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

**2 FEBRUARY**

God reveals himself from justice to justice, from truth to truth and from love to love. Mary and Joseph are just, they live of truth and love. Even Simeon and Anna are just, they live in truth and love. Mary's justice is higher than Joseph's justice, the justice of Mary and Joseph is much more than the justice of Simeon and Anna. Mary and Joseph live their justice. Even Simeon and Anna live their justice. Mary and Joseph bring the Son of God into the temple. In the temple the Holy Spirit through his own ways ensures that Simeon and Anna meet with their Messiah.

The Old Simeon tells humanity who Jesus is. The one who came to reveal God to the Gentiles in his truth, holiness, faithfulness, justice, compassion, piety and mercy. Who wants to know the true God must necessarily welcome the light of Christ Jesus. His light is refused, God is not known. The God worshiped without the full light of Jesus is the God conceived, imagined and elaborated by men. Even if the God of the Old Testament is worshiped, he is worshiped by having to declare that he is a God incapable of fulfilling his promises, his prophecies and his oracles. Without the light of Jesus, the God of Abraham is incomplete, inadequate, inaccurate, unaccomplished and defective. He lacks the fullness of his eternal truth. He is devoid of the mystery of unity and trinity. He does not know either the mystery of incarnation, or of resurrection, or of Pentecost.

Another truth announced by Simeon reveals that every heart is revealed before Lord Jesus. If the heart is honest, seeks the truth, is a lover of justice and holiness, welcomes Christ, by getting converted and believing in the Gospel. If the heart is impure, dishonest, wicked and bad, it will reject Christ, deny and fight him and his Gospel. The crucifixion of Jesus is the attestation of the impure heart of those who in various ways contributed to the pronunciation of his death sentence. Not only is Jesus a sign of contradiction for yesterday, he will be it until his coming for universal judgment. Hearts will also be revealed on the last day. The bad heart will be turned away from him for eternity, while the good heart will be welcomed by him into his blessed kingdom.

*When the days were completed for their purification according to the law of Moses, they took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, just as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every male that opens the womb shall be consecrated to the Lord," and to offer the sacrifice of "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons," in accordance with the dictate in the law of the Lord. Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. This man was righteous and devout, awaiting the consolation of Israel, and the holy Spirit was upon him. It had been revealed to him by the holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Messiah of the Lord. He came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to perform the custom of the law in regard to him, he took him into his arms and blessed God, saying: "Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you prepared in sight of all the peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel." The child's father and mother were amazed at what was said about him; and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted (and you yourself a sword will pierce) so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived seven years with her husband after her marriage, and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple, but worshiped night and day with fasting and prayer. And coming forward at that very time, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem. When they had fulfilled all the prescriptions of the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favour of God was upon him.*

Simeon also associates the Virgin Mary with the passion of her Son. She will not end up on the cross. She will not be a martyr in the body, she will be entirely in her soul. On that day, Mother and Son will be a single holocaust of love. Mary will be the holocaust in the holocaust.

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

## THEY HASTENED AT THE PLACE BEFORE THEM

## 1Kings 3,4-13; Ps 118; Mk 6,30-34

### 3 FEBRUARY

The disciples return from the mission. They are exhausted, tired. Jesus, who is the righteousness of God on our earth, knows that the body also has the right to a well-deserved rest. On the rest the Ancient Scripture not only tells us that having finished his work, God rested, but also that the Lord has established a time of rest even for man and for every animal that works for man. The earth must have its rest, too. Every seven years it must not be worked, including the year of the great jubilee. Respect for rest is a true act of adoration of the Lord, because one is delivered to his Providence.

*Thus the heavens and the earth and all their array were completed. Since on the seventh day God was finished with the work he had been doing, he rested on the seventh day from all the work he had undertaken. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work he had done in creation (Gen 2,1-3). "Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day. Six days you may labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord, your God. No work may be done then either by you, or your son or daughter, or your male or female slave, or your beast, or by the alien who lives with you. In six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them; but on the seventh day he rested. That is why the Lord has blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy (Ex 20,8-11).*

*The Lord said to Moses on Mount Sinai, "Speak to the Israelites and tell them: When you enter the land that I am giving you, let the land, too, keep a Sabbath for the Lord. For six years you may sow your field, and for six years prune your vineyard, gathering in their produce. But during the seventh year the land shall have a complete rest, a Sabbath for the Lord, when you may neither sow your field nor prune your vineyard. The after growth of your harvest you shall not reap, nor shall you pick the grapes of your untrimmed vines in this year of Sabbath rest for the land. While the land has its Sabbath, all its produce will be food equally for you yourself and for your male and female slaves, for your hired help and the tenants who live with you, and likewise for your livestock and for the wild animals on your land.*

*"Seven weeks of years shall you count - seven times seven years - so that the seven cycles amount to forty-nine years. Then, on the tenth day of the seventh month let the trumpet resound; on this, the Day of Atonement, the trumpet blast shall re-echo throughout your land. This fiftieth year you shall make sacred by proclaiming liberty in the land for all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you, when every one of you shall return to his own property, every one to his own family estate. In this fiftieth year, your year of jubilee, you shall not sow, nor shall you reap the after growth or pick the grapes from the untrimmed vines. Since this is the jubilee, which shall be sacred for you, you may not eat of its produce, except as taken directly from the field (Lev 25,1-12).*

Jesus is supremely right towards his disciples. There is no justice when the law of his Father is broken. Jesus came precisely because of this: to teach each man how to live justice not only to God, not only to others, but also to themselves. Man's justice must always embrace heaven and earth, spirit, soul, body. Today men are very unjust toward the soul and the spirit. It is stolen from them to give to the body. If one is unjust to one's soul and one's spirit, might he ever be right towards his brothers? He might not be so because he deprives the soul and spirit of that holy help that comes from contact with his Lord, which makes them capable of living all justice to all. Can a person hungry for several days carry out a heavy manual labour? But can a soul and a spirit left hungry for years carry out the heaviest of works that is the practice of justice to God, heaven, earth and every inhabitant in them? It is urgent to reflect at least. Without efficient soul and spirit there is no justice.

*The apostles gathered together with Jesus and reported all they had done and taught. He said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." People were coming and going in great numbers, and they had no opportunity even to eat. So they went off in the boat by themselves to a deserted place. People saw them leaving and many came to know about it. They hastened there on foot from all the towns and arrived at the place before them.*

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels, Saints, make us righteous towards soul and spirit. The Christian, like Jesus, must be a model and example of perfect justice.

## FOR THIS PURPOSE HAVE I COME

## Jb 7,1-4.6-7; Ps 146; 1 Cor 9,16-19.22-23; Mk 1,29-39

### 4 FEBRUARY – V SUNDAY O.T. – B

Every man wished the other man were from his will, his desires and his multiple daily needs or requests. How long can one be from others and when, on the other hand, must a sharp refusal be made? The line not to be crossed is the will of God manifested, revealed and made to reach our ears. Against the Word of God one cannot be from any creature. We know that against the word of God that forbade to draw from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil the woman was from Satan and the man was from his woman. It was death and the overturning of God's plan for man. From this moment on man was from his body, from his instinct, from his concupiscence and from his desires, ending up by no longer being in anything from God.

After liberation from the slavery of Egypt, the Lord puts ten impassable limits on his people. Whoever goes beyond them comes out of life and falls into death, abandons the house of blessing and enters that of the curse. But man must be from the will of his Lord even in all goodness. The good, all the good also must never be from the man, but always from God. Knowing this Solomon asks for the gift of wisdom because in it: "*For in her is a spirit intelligent, holy, unique, Manifold, subtle, agile, clear, unstained, certain, Not baneful, loving the good, keen, unhampered, beneficent, kindly, Firm, secure, tranquil, all-powerful, all-seeing, And pervading all spirits, though they be intelligent, pure and very subtle*" (Wis 7,22-23). He asks for it impelled by a high and profound truth: "*For what man knows God's counsel, or who can conceive what our Lord intends? For the deliberations of mortals are timid, and unsure are our plans. For the corruptible body burdens the soul and the earthen shelter weighs down the mind that has many concerns. And scarce do we guess the things on earth, and what is within our grasp we find with difficulty; but when things are in heaven, who can search them out? Or who ever knew your counsel, except you had given Wisdom and sent your holy spirit from on high?*" (Wis 9: 13-17). Is wisdom alone enough to lead man to the purest will of God?

Jesus is full not of wisdom, but of the same source of all wisdom that is the Holy Spirit. He knows that the Spirit of the Lord does not act without being uninterruptedly invoked in purity of faith and willingness ready for all obedience. The temptation of Satan in Him is very subtle. It is the temptation of mercy towards bodily works, abandoning or neglecting spiritual ones. How do we know when a miracle is a temptation and for Jesus it is no longer a sign that opens the heart to conversion and to the reception of his mystery of redemption in the gift of the Word? This light comes only from the Holy Spirit, invoked in the long prayers of the night, spent in solitary places, far from any noise or disturbance of men.

*On leaving the synagogue he entered the house of Simon and Andrew with James and John. Simon's mother-in-law lay sick with a fever. They immediately told him about her. He approached, grasped her hand, and helped her up. Then the fever left her and she waited on them. When it was evening, after sunset, they brought to him all who were ill or possessed by demons. The whole town was gathered at the door. He cured many who were sick with various diseases, and he drove out many demons, not permitting them to speak because they knew him. Rising very early before dawn, he left and went off to a deserted place, where he prayed. Simon and those who were with him pursued him and on finding him said, "Everyone is looking for you." He told them, "Let us go on to the nearby villages that I may preach there also. For this purpose have I come." So he went into their synagogues, preaching and driving out demons throughout the whole of Galilee.*

In prayer, the Father tells Jesus what to do and with immediate obedience he leaves the sick people who have come to be healed and goes to other villages, to bring them the comfort of the Word, of the Gospel. Without a continuous, uninterrupted dialogue of prayer with the Spirit, it is easy to fall into temptation for the good, the better and even the best.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints, teach us to pray well.

## ONLY THE TASSEL ON HIS CLOAK

## 1Kings 8,1-7.9-13; Ps 131; Mk 6,53-56

### 5 FEBRUARY

The miracle by contact with the body of the prophet is known because practiced by Elijah and Elisha. With the latter also the contact with his grave operates a resurrection.

*Sometime later the son of the mistress of the house fell sick, and his sickness grew more severe until he stopped breathing. So she said to Elijah, "Why have you done this to me, O man of God? Have you come to me to call attention to my guilt and to kill my son?" "Give me your son," Elijah said to her. Taking him from her lap, he carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his own bed. He called out to the Lord: "O Lord, my God, will you afflict even the widow with whom I am staying by killing her son?" Then he stretched himself out upon the child three times and called out to the Lord: "O Lord, my God, let the life breath return to the body of this child." The Lord heard the prayer of Elijah; the life breath returned to the child's body and he revived. Taking the child, Elijah brought him down into the house from the upper room and gave him to his mother. "See!" Elijah said to her, "your son is alive." "Now indeed I know that you you are a man of God," the woman replied to Elijah. "The word of the Lord comes truly from your mouth." (1Kings 17,17-24).*

*"Gird your loins," Elisha said to Gehazi, "take my staff with you and be off; if you meet anyone, do not greet him, and if anyone greets you, do not answer. Lay my staff upon the boy." But the boy's mother cried out: "As the Lord lives and as you yourself live, I will not release you." So he started to go back with her. Meanwhile, Gehazi had gone on ahead and had laid the staff upon the boy, but there was no sound or sign of life. He returned to meet Elisha and informed him that the boy had not awakened. When Elisha reached the house, he found the boy lying dead. He went in, closed the door on them both, and prayed to the Lord. Then he lay upon the child on the bed, placing his mouth upon the child's mouth, his eyes upon the eyes, and his hands upon the hands. As Elisha stretched himself over the child, the body became warm. He arose, paced up and down the room, and then once more lay down upon the boy, who now sneezed seven times and opened his eyes. Elisha summoned Gehazi and said, "Call the Shunammite." She came at his call, and Elisha said to her, "Take your son." She came in and fell at his feet in gratitude; then she took her son and left the room (2Kings 4,29-37).*

*Elisha died and was buried. At the time, bands of Moabites used to raid the land each year. Once some people were burying a man, when suddenly they spied such a raiding band. So they cast the dead man into the grave of Elisha, and everyone went off. But when the man came in contact with the bones of Elisha, he came back to life and rose to his feet (2Kings 13,20-21).*

There is a very great difference of sanctity among Elijah, Elisha and Jesus. Elijah and Elisha are like a little fire. It takes a long time for the wood to burn. On the other hand, Jesus is more than a burning furnace. As soon as the wood touches the furnace it immediately burns and is consumed. Elijah and Elisha struggle for the child's soul to return to the body. A word is sufficient for Jesus. He must touch no body. It is enough that another body touches even the flap of the furnace which is his body and everything burns and consumes itself. In every work performed by him the abyss which separates him from all the prophets and righteous of the Old Testament is revealed. Jesus is the divinely and the humanly different. Between Him and all the others there is not the distance that separates eternity from time, there is the eternal infinite.

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

Observe all the works of men. Who is honest of mind, must confess that in no other man there is such a high sanctity. Scripture attests that every man is deception, falsehood and lie. Yet millions of men pursue falsehood. They leave the truth to embrace it. This chasing falsehood, the planting of oneself in it, attests and reveals the profound laceration produced by sin in the heart, in the soul, in the mind and in the body itself. Today the Christian also lets himself be bewitched by falsehood. However, he does not separate from the body of Christ, he has decided to pollute and destroy it from within.

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

## YOU NULLIFY THE WORD OF GOD

## 1Kings 8,22-23.27-30; Ps 83; Mk 7,1-13

### 6 FEBRUARY

The prophecy of Isaiah mentioned by Jesus, if read in its entirety, is a clear testimony given to Jesus the Lord, but also a declaration on the end of the wisdom of the wise and of the intelligence of the intelligent. Those who accuse Jesus attest to being foolish and ignorant, incapable of any discernment. It goes quite beyond and reveals that the Lord has a plan of salvation for his people. God is preparing to create a new hope for his people. We know that Christ is the hope of the Lord and it is in him that it is fulfilled and lived.

*The Lord said: Since this people draws near with words only and honours me with their lips alone, though their hearts are far from me, And their reverence for me has become routine observance of the precepts of men, Therefore I will again deal with this people in surprising and wondrous fashion: The wisdom of its wise men shall perish and the understanding of its prudent men be hid. Woe to those who would hide their plans too deep for the Lord! Who work in the dark, saying, "Who sees us, or who knows us?" Your perversity is as though the potter were taken to be the clay: As though what is made should say of its maker, "He made me not!" Or the vessel should say of the potter, "He does not understand." But a very little while, and Lebanon shall be changed into an orchard, and the orchard be regarded as a forest! On that day the deaf shall hear the words of a book; And out of gloom and darkness, the eyes of the blind shall see. The lowly will ever find joy in the Lord, and the poor rejoice in the Holy One of Israel. For the tyrant will be no more and the arrogant will have gone; All who are alert to do evil will be cut off, those whose mere word condemns a man, Who ensnare his defender at the gate, and leave the just man with an empty claim. Therefore thus says the Lord, the God of the house of Jacob, who redeemed Abraham: Now Jacob shall have nothing to be ashamed of, nor shall his face grow pale. When his children see the work of my hands in his midst, They shall keep my name holy; they shall reverence the Holy One of Jacob, and be in awe of the God of Israel. Those who err in spirit shall acquire understanding, and those who find fault shall receive instruction (Is 29,13-24).*

Pharisees and scribes attest to the world that the wisdom of the wise has truly vanished and the intelligence of the intelligent has disappeared. Not only have these become fools, they are also crafty and interested administrators of the true religion. They do everything to take care of their personal interests, coming to the point of abolishing the Lord's commandment. From guardians of the Law, they have turned into curators of personal interests alone, sacrificing all the Law and the Prophets. When it comes to that, it is the death of faith.

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

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

Jesus is truly intelligent and wise. He immediately moves the axis of the dialogue. If he had occupied himself with defending his disciples from the charge of violating the tradition of the ancients, they would have stoned him. Pointing instead on the Commandments of the Law and on the Word of God, clearly transgressed by them with clever artifices, he defends his disciples, but at the same time reveals what the rottenness of their faith is. They are without the Word of God.

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

## ARE EVEN YOU LIKEWISE WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING?

## Kings 10,1-10; Ps 36; Mk 7,14-23

### 7 FEBRUARY

The understanding of everything is a gift of the Holy Spirit in man, a fruit of his wisdom and intelligence. Jesus wished his parents already understood not the depths and abyss of the mystery, but at least the things that fall before their eyes. But even this understanding is not the fruit of experience, but the most pure present gift of the Holy Spirit. In the Gospel according to John, Jesus first tells Nicodemus that the things of heaven, hidden and mysterious, cannot be understood if we are not even able to understand the visible and at hand things of the earth. Then, He tells the Jews that He does not pretend that they understand his mystery which is eternal and humanly incomprehensible, but that at least they do not deny that his works come from the Father. In this sin Nicodemus did not fall. He sees and confesses.

*Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. He came to Jesus at night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one can do these signs that you are doing unless God is with him." Jesus answered and said to him, "Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." Nicodemus said to him, "How can a person once grown old be born again? Surely he cannot reenter his mother's womb and be born again, can he?" Jesus answered, "Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of flesh is flesh and what is born of spirit is spirit. Do not be amazed that I told you, 'You must be born from above.' The wind blows where it wills, and you can hear the sound it makes, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes; so it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." Nicodemus answered and said to him, "How can this happen?" Jesus answered and said to him, "You are the teacher of Israel and you do not understand this? Amen, amen, I say to you, we speak of what we know and we testify to what we have seen, but you people do not accept our testimony. If I tell you about earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you about heavenly things?" (Jn 3,1-15).*

*The Jews again picked up rocks to stone him. Jesus answered them, "I have shown you many good works from my Father. For which of these are you trying to stone me?" The Jews answered him, "We are not stoning you for a good work but for blasphemy. You, a man, are making yourself God." Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, "You are gods"'? If it calls them gods to whom the word of God came, and scripture cannot be set aside, can you say that the one whom the Father has consecrated and sent into the world blasphemes because I said, 'I am the Son of God'? If I do not perform my Father's works, do not believe me; but if I perform them, even if you do not believe me, believe the works, so that you may realize (and understand) that the Father is in me and I am in the Father" (Jn 10,31-39).*

What must the disciples understand? Since they will have to go to the world to purify the hearts of men, from which all impurity and immorality, idolatry and superstition, pride, envy and every other vice comes out, they must always know how to separate what enters into man and what comes out of him. Only what comes out of the impure, bad and evil heart contaminates man and humanity. They will also have to separate material things from spiritual things, words of truth and words of lies. Never might a dirty hand that takes food, contaminate the heart, at most it might infect the body. Never the soul, never the spirit. It will infect the soul if the thing that is introduced into the body is harmful or even lethal to it. It would be a true suicide.

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

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints make us capable of discernment.

## LET THE CHILDREN BE FED FIRST

## 1Kings 11,4-13; Ps 105; Mk 7,24-30

### 8 FEBRUARY

In the episode of the Syro-Phoenician woman, there is hidden a truth that does not only concern Christ Jesus, but every other man, especially every disciple of Jesus, in all his ministry and gift. It is right to explain everything by letting ourselves be enlightened by Saint Paul.

*Although I am free in regard to all, I have made myself a slave to all so as to win over as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew to win over Jews; to those under the law I became like one under the law - though I myself am not under the law - to win over those under the law. To those outside the law I became like one outside the law - though I am not outside God's law but within the law of Christ - to win over those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, to win over the weak. I have become all things to all, to save at least some. All this I do for the sake of the gospel, so that I too may have a share in it (1Cor 9,19-23). There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit. To one is given through the Spirit the expression of wisdom; to another the expression of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit; to another mighty deeds; to another prophecy; to another discernment of spirits; to another varieties of tongues; to another interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit produces all of these, distributing them individually to each person as he wishes (1Cor 12,4-11). And he gave some as apostles, others as prophets, others as evangelists, others as pastors and teachers, to equip the holy ones for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the extent of the full stature of Christ (Eph 4,11-13).*

Jesus also comes to our help with the Parable of the Good Samaritan:

*Jesus replied, "A man fell victim to robbers as he went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. They stripped and beat him and went off leaving him half-dead. A priest happened to be going down that road, but when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. Likewise a Levite came to the place, and when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. But a Samaritan traveller who came upon him was moved with compassion at the sight. He approached the victim, poured oil and wine over his wounds and bandaged them. Then he lifted him up on his own animal, took him to an inn and cared for him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper with the instruction, 'Take care of him. If you spend more than what I have given you, I shall repay you on my way back.' Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbour to the robbers' victim?" He answered, "The one who treated him with mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise" (Lk 10,30-37).*

The priest and the Levite are hermetically sealed in their ministry. An urgent need arises. One is obliged to temporarily suspend the law that regulates their life. In front of an immediate and not procrastinating good we must always make ourselves available to that good. These are the crumbs that fall and must always fall from the table of our personal ministry. Every imprisonment is a sin against charity. By will, Jesus must not look for the sick, but if the sick is before his eyes, if the person asks him for his grace, he can always grant the request. Refusing would mean sinning against charity. Jesus is the charity of God in the world.

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

Jesus, granting the woman's request, does not violate the will of the Father. He carries it out.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints, fill us with all wisdom.

## HE HAS DONE ALL THINGS WELL

## 1Kings 11,29-32; Ps 80; Mk 7,31-37

### 9 FEBRUARY

When a man is with the pure heart, he will always see God in all his works. Scripture is a hymn to the goodness of God who has created everything good. The Book of Genesis begins by making God himself confess to that all the works created by him are good. The confession of man must always be added to this confession of God. This is how the Sirach contemplates the works of God and proclaims their beauty.

*The works of God are all of them good; in its own time every need is supplied. At his word the waters become still as in a flask; he had but to speak and the reservoirs were made. He has but to command and his will is done; nothing can limit his achievement. The works of all mankind are present to him; not a thing escapes his eye. His gaze spans all the ages; to him there is nothing unexpected. No cause then to say: "What is the purpose of this?" Everything is chosen to satisfy a need. His blessing overflows like the Nile; like the Euphrates it enriches the surface of the earth. Again, his wrath expels the nations and turns fertile land into a salt marsh. For the virtuous his paths are level, to the haughty they are steep; Good things for the good he provided from the beginning, but for the wicked good things and bad. Chief of all needs for human life are water and fire, iron and salt, The heart of the wheat, milk and honey, the blood of the grape, and oil, and cloth; For the good all these are good, but for the wicked they turn out evil.*

*There are storm winds created to punish, which in their fury can dislodge mountains; When destruction must be, they hurl all their force and appease the anger of their Maker. In his treasury also, kept for the proper time, are fire and hail, famine, disease, Ravenous beasts, scorpions, vipers, and the avenging sword to exterminate the wicked; In doing his bidding they rejoice, in their assignments they disobey not his command. So from the first I took my stand, and wrote down as my theme: The works of God are all of them good; every need when it comes he fills. No cause then to say: "This is not as good as that"; for each shows its worth at the proper time. So now with full joy of heart proclaim and bless the name of the Holy One (Sir 39,16-35).*

The rampant atheism of our day no longer sees creation as the work of the Lord. The subtraction of the whole universe to its Creator is the ecological damage that generates every other damage. Having subtracted his work from God, man too has withdrawn from his God in an ontological and not only moral way. What is the fruit of this perennial ontological subtraction? His death. Man has become like a tree that has ontologically escaped the earth, removing its roots from the ground to expose them to the scorching sun of summer. This is the first true ecology to work on, otherwise tomorrow the dog, the cat, the snake and the spider will be declared by law Lords and Creators of man. But even in the Church there is a sound ecology to be recovered. The Christian has taken his roots out of the body of Christ and with infinite folly is planting them in the mind of Satan. This false ecology is disastrous. The exfoliation of the Church is at the door.

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

The crowds that come to know the works of Jesus, in the simplicity of their hearts, still unpolluted by the perverse ecology of scribes and Pharisees, attest and confess that Jesus *"did all things well: he makes the deaf hear and makes the dumb speak."* This same confession should be made by the crowds of today on the work of every disciple of Jesus. However, the opposite often happens. Faithful and ministers in the Church are accused by the crowds of true betrayal and denial of the Gospel. It is the scandal.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints, help us to do everything well.

## WITHOUT ANYTHING TO EAT

## 1 Kings 12,26-32; 13,33-34; Ps 105; Mk 8,1-10

### 10 FEBRUARY

In the desert Jesus acts as his father had once acted with Moses. The people were hungry. To feed them, the Lord sent bread from heaven. They do not come out for a day, but for forty years, until the people fed with wheat in the Promised Land, after having crossed the Jordan. The gift of God was great.

*Having set out from Elim, the whole Israelite community came into the desert of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departure from the land of Egypt. Here in the desert the whole Israelite community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. The Israelites said to them, "Would that we had died at the Lord’s hand in the land of Egypt, as we sat by our fleshpots and ate our fill of bread! But you had to lead us into this desert to make the whole community die of famine!" Then the Lord said to Moses, "I will now rain down bread from heaven for you. Each day the people are to go out and gather their daily portion; thus will I test them, to see whether they follow my instructions or not. On the sixth day, however, when they prepare what they bring in, let it be twice as much as they gather on the other days."*

*So Moses and Aaron told all the Israelites, "At evening you will know that it was the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt; and in the morning you will see the glory of the Lord, as he heeds your grumbling against him. But what are we that you should grumble against us? When the Lord gives you flesh to eat in the evening," continued Moses, "and in the morning your fill of bread, as he heeds the grumbling you utter against him, what then are we? Your grumbling is not against us, but against the Lord." Then Moses said to Aaron, "Tell the whole Israelite community: Present yourselves before the Lord, for he has heard your grumbling." When Aaron announced this to the whole Israelite community, they turned toward the desert, and lo, the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud! The Lord spoke to Moses and said, "I have heard the grumbling of the Israelites. Tell them: In the evening twilight you shall eat flesh, and in the morning you shall have your fill of bread, so that you may know that I, the Lord, am your God" (Ex 16,1-12).*

Jesus is He the true bread descended from heaven. In the multiplication of the loaves, then he works what he will do tomorrow in the Upper Room in the reality of his body and his blood. However, the methods change. For Him to be transformed into the bread of life it is also necessary for man to participate in it according to two different ways. To him we must offer the bread and wine to be transformed into his body and blood. He needs some men who are dedicated to feeding his people first with the Word and then with his body and his blood.

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

These are two essential modalities, without which there is no gift of Jesus the Lord. Without the gift of bread and wine to be transformed into the body and blood of Christ there is no Eucharist. You remain hungry forever. But even without the gift to Christ of these men, who will be conformed to him in the sacrament of order, no bread and no wine might ever become the Eucharist. A third mode is also necessary. With Moses it was the Lord who led the people in the desert. Now the man is the one who must go to the desert of the house of the Lord, if he wants to feed on the bread of eternal life. Jesus does not give bread to those who are not in the desert of his body. He eats the body of Christ who is the body of Christ to live as the body of Christ. Who is outside the body of Christ or does not want to live as the body of Christ, cannot eat the body of Christ. The necessary goals are missing.

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

**FEBRUARY 2018**

## SECOND DECADE OF FEBRUARY

## I DO WILL IT. BE MADE CLEAN

## Lv 13,1-2.44-46; Ps 31; 1Cor 10,31-11,1; Mk 1,40-45

### 11 FEBRUARY – VI SUNDAY O.T. – B

Jesus is divinely wise, always enlightened in every immediate actuality by the Holy Spirit. He knows that he lives in a religion in which every Law of his Father must be observed with absolute fidelity. He never gives a single pretext to Pharisees and scribes so that they can accuse him of subversion against the Law of fathers. According to the Law of Leviticus, it was the ministry of the Priest to ascertain the existence of leprosy and to exclude the leper from the community. Just as it was his ministry to verify the healing of the disease and to insert into the community through a complex ritual of purification. Jesus asks the healed leper to fulfil the Law in all its prescriptions and thus resumes his place within the Lord's people.

*"If a man is poor and cannot afford so much, he shall take one male lamb for a guilt offering, to be used as a wave offering in atonement for himself, one tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil for a cereal offering, a log of oil, and two turtledoves or pigeons, which he can more easily afford, the one as a sin offering and the other as a holocaust. On the eighth day of his purification he shall bring them to the priest, at the entrance of the meeting tent before the Lord. Taking the guilt-offering lamb, along with the log of oil, the priest shall wave them as a wave offering before the Lord. When he has slaughtered the guilt-offering lamb, he shall take some of its blood, and put it on the tip of the right ear of the man being purified, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot. The priest shall then pour some of the oil into the palm of his own left hand and with his right forefinger sprinkle it seven times before the Lord. Some of the oil in his hand the priest shall also put on the tip of the man's right ear, the thumb of his right hand, and the big toe of his right foot, over the blood of the guilt offering. The rest of the oil in his hand the priest shall put on the man's head. Thus shall he make atonement for him before the Lord. Then, of the turtledoves or pigeons, such as the man can afford, the priest shall offer up one as a sin offering and the other as a holocaust, along with the cereal offering. Thus shall the priest make atonement before the Lord for the man who is to be purified. This is the law for one afflicted with leprosy who has insufficient means for his purification" (Lev 14,21-32).*

Jesus gives the leper a precise command, sternly admonishing him and immediately dismissing him: *"Be careful not to tell anyone".* It was as if Jesus had said to him: *"Now return to the community of the Lord and proclaim and spread to as many as you encounter on your path what I have done for you"*. Why does Jesus ask absolute silence? Because mercy towards one cannot be mercy towards everyone. The Father has not sent him to heal, cure and restore to good health all those who are in the suffering of their body. Instead, his mission is to teach every man how to live his own cross, taking it, carrying it and living it himself, giving us the example. The world tempted him so that he got down. Instead he stays on his wood until the last breath. The miracle in Jesus is only a sign, so that all the people come to the true faith of his Person and into his mystery.

*A leper came to him (and kneeling down) begged him and said, "If you wish, you can make me clean." Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand, touched him, and said to him, "I do will it. Be made clean." The leprosy left him immediately, and he was made clean. Then, warning him sternly, he dismissed him at once. Then he said to him, "See that you tell no one anything, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses prescribed; that will be proof for them." The man went away and began to publicize the whole matter. He spread the report abroad so that it was impossible for Jesus to enter a town openly. He remained outside in deserted places, and people kept coming to him from everywhere.*

Even the disciple of Jesus must imitate his Master. He too must carry every cross, teaching every other man how to carry it. Then if he might live with great mercy towards his brothers, it is right for him to do it. If he cannot, he is always obliged to show them how each cross that is drawn into the body of Christ with grace, is carried.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints, help us to carry every cross.

## NO SIGN WILL BE GIVEN

## Jm 1,1-11; Ps 118; Mk 8,11-13

### 12 FEBRUARY

The Psalm reveals to us that in the Lord's people the sign was always like frost in the sun. As with the first ray of the sun, the frost evaporates, so also every sign previously given disappeared from the memory of the people of God and they returned either in the murmur or in the non faith. With the signs, the faith was only propped up like with cane support. Then it succumbed under the weight of the new history.

*And not be like their fathers, A stubborn and rebellious generation, A generation that did not prepare its heart And whose spirit was not faithful to God.**The sons of Ephraim were archers equipped with bows, Yet they turned back in the day of battle.**They did not keep the covenant of God And refused to walk in His law;**They forgot His deeds And His miracles that He had shown them.**He wrought wonders before their fathers In the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan.**He divided the sea and caused them to pass through, And He made the waters stand up like a heap.**Then He led them with the cloud by day And all the night with a light of fire.**He split the rocks in the wilderness And gave them abundant drink like the ocean depths.**He brought forth streams also from the rock And caused waters to run down like rivers.* *Yet they still continued to sin against Him, To rebel against the Most High in the desert.**And in their heart they put God to the test By asking food according to their desire.**Then they spoke against God; They said, “Can God prepare a table in the wilderness?* *“Behold, He struck the rock so that waters gushed out, And streams were overflowing; Can He give bread also? Will He provide meat for His people?”**Therefore the Lord heard and was full of wrath; And a fire was kindled against Jacob And anger also mounted against Israel,**Because they did not believe in God And did not trust in His salvation.**Yet He commanded the clouds above And opened the doors of heaven;**He rained down manna upon them to eat And gave them food from heaven.**Man did eat the bread of angels; He sent them food in abundance.*

*He caused the east wind to blow in the heavens And by His power He directed the south wind.**When He rained meat upon them like the dust, Even winged fowl like the sand of the seas,**Then He let them fall in the midst of their camp, Round about their dwellings.**So they ate and were well filled, And their desire He gave to them. Before they had satisfied their desire, While their food was in their mouths,**The anger of God rose against them And killed some of their stoutest ones, And subdued the choice men of Israel.**In spite of all this they still sinned And did not believe in His wonderful works.**So He brought their days to an end in futility And their years in sudden terror.**When He killed them, then they sought Him, And returned and searched diligently for God;**And they remembered that God was their rock, And the Most High God their Redeemer.**But they deceived Him with their mouth And lied to Him with their tongue.**For their heart was not steadfast toward Him, Nor were they faithful in His covenant.**But He, being compassionate, forgave their iniquity and did not destroy them; And often He restrained His anger And did not arouse all His wrath.**Thus He remembered that they were but flesh, A wind that passes and does not return (Cf. Ps 78 (77) 1-72).*

Jesus had made many signs. In power of works he had surpassed all those who had preceded him from Noah to his days, including Moses himself, Elias, Elisha. They do not ask for a sign like those already seen. They ask for one that gives them absolute certainty. This is impossible. If the heart is impure, it will always find something not to open itself to faith. Being the Pharisees with an impure heart and with a mind obscured by evil, Jesus refuses them any sign. The dialogue of salvation is interrupted.

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

When the heart of man overcomes the limits of evil and challenges Jesus to put him in difficulty, so as to be able to mock him before the world, Jesus who knows the intimate of man, more than man knows himself, interrupts the dialogue and withdraws. The motivations are two. The first is his willingness not to compromise his credibility before those who are eager for his salvation. The second is to get away from the vindictive fury of the Pharisees, who can also react with a murderous and homicidal violence. The gift of the kingdom of God is so precious that it always imposes vigilance on it so that no damage is given to it. Jesus knows that evil must never be challenged and that is why he withdraws. His mercy of salvation ends when the other heart says enough and challenges the Lord.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints make us humble at heart and meek.

## THE LEAVEN OF THE PHARISEES AND THE LEAVEN OF HEROD

## Jm 1,12-18; Ps 93; Mk 8,14-21

### 13 FEBRUARY

Jesus does not want faith in his pure word to become tomorrow a religion made up of falsehood, lie, care of personal interests, abandonment of him and his divine and human truth. From a faith generating eternal life it would be transformed into an apparatus of slavery and eternal death. In the Gospel according to Matthew, Jesus reveals what the leaven of the Pharisees and the scribes that must never be placed in the flour of his Gospel, is.

*As for you, do not be called 'Rabbi.' You have but one teacher, and you are all brothers. Call no one on earth your father; you have but one Father in heaven. Do not be called 'Master'; you have but one master, the Messiah. The greatest among you must be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled; but whoever humbles himself will be exalted.*

*"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites. You lock the kingdom of heaven before human beings. You do not enter yourselves, nor do you allow entrance to those trying to enter. "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites. You traverse sea and land to make one convert, and when that happens you make him a child of Gehenna twice as much as yourselves. "Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'If one swears by the temple, it means nothing, but if one swears by the gold of the temple, one is obligated.' Blind fools, which is greater, the gold, or the temple that made the gold sacred? And you say, 'If one swears by the altar, it means nothing, but if one swears by the gift on the altar, one is obligated.' You blind ones, which is greater, the gift, or the altar that makes the gift sacred? One who swears by the altar swears by it and all that is upon it; one who swears by the temple swears by it and by him who dwells in it; one who swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and by him who is seated on it.*

*"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites. You pay tithes of mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier things of the law: judgment and mercy and fidelity. (But) these you should have done, without neglecting the others. Blind guides, who strain out the gnat and swallow the camel! "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites. You cleanse the outside of cup and dish, but inside they are full of plunder and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee, cleanse first the inside of the cup, so that the outside also may be clean. "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites. You are like whitewashed tombs, which appear beautiful on the outside, but inside are full of dead men's bones and every kind of filth. Even so, on the outside you appear righteous, but inside you are filled with hypocrisy and evildoing (Mt 23,8-28).*

Jesus wants his disciples with a pure, meek, humble heart, always turned to his heart, in order to listen to him and follow all his teachings. An impure heart turns even the most holy things into impurity. A mind of sin also scraps from the Word of God the crumbs of truths impossible to remove, because they are the same word in its literal tenor. Yet with his wickedness man manages to give contrary voice to every word uttered by the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The leaven of Herod is immorality that causes one to succumb before the arrogance of a greater immorality.

*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?"*

How do you manage to avoid the yeast of falsehood, hypocrisy, lies, deception, personal interests and immorality that always succumbs before the even greater and more overbearing immorality? One can at one condition: that one hears the Lord without thinking of other things that disturb the mind and the heart. You listen, if you do not understand, you ask, but without any distraction. Instead the disciples are distracted, they pursue their thoughts. When one pursues his own thoughts, he always falls either in the yeast of the Pharisees or in that of Herod. Pursuing the thoughts of Christ means always salvation.

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

## SO THAT YOUR ALMSGIVING MAY BE SECRET

## Jl 2,12-18; Ps 50; 2Cor 5,20-6,2; Mt 6,1-6.16-18

### 14 FEBRUARY – ASH WEDNESDAY

Jesus does not say what good works are to be done. For Jesus, the only good work to do is to live in perfect obedience every Word of his Sermon on the Mount. He was given by the Father the mandate to give the whole Word in fullness of truth and fulfilment. The mandate was also given to show the disciples how the Word is also lived on the Cross and in every other juncture of life. Everything else is up to the Holy Spirit. It is he who must suggest to the heart and mind, to the intelligence and will what to do and how to do it, so that the work produces not only a physical, but above all a spiritual good. Without the dwelling without interruption of the disciple of Jesus in the Word and in the Holy Spirit, goodness is done that will never produce eternal life. It will be done entirely at the service of our glory and on the contrary not for the glory of the Lord.

The universal principle for every work that is accomplished, no matter which one, from the simplest to the most complex, will have to be lived from the beginning to the end just to give God the greatest glory. We can make the understanding of the principle simple with a further truth. God hires us on a daily basis. He assumes us so that we place ourselves or work exclusively in the service of his glory. The service goes from morning to night and from evening to morning, in public and in private, in the temple and outside the temple, in houses and in squares, in the city and in the country and in front of every man. The employment contract consists of just one article: you do everything on earth - everything is absolute, full and includes every second and every operation - and I will give you eternal glory in my light. First consequence of this article: the good, the bad, the just, the unjust, the sinner and the saint disappear. Everything must be done for the Lord. But the good must be done to the Lord in the best form of good. We observe this contract, the doors of eternal life will open for us. If we have worked for ourselves or for men, God will not give any reward. He cannot give it. We did not comply with the employment contract.

*"(But) take care not to perform righteous deeds in order that people may see them; otherwise, you will have no recompense from your heavenly Father. When you give alms, do not blow a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets to win the praise of others. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right is doing, so that your almsgiving may be secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you.*

*"When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, who love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on street corners so that others may see them. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you.*

*"When you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites. They neglect their appearance, so that they may appear to others to be fasting. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you may not appear to be fasting, except to your Father who is hidden. And your Father who sees what is hidden will repay you.*

The whole Gospel must not be lived for men, but by a contract of employment signed with Christ Jesus. The world has nothing to do with the contract. It must only enjoy the fruits that the contract necessarily produces. Everything is the relationship of the signer of the contract with Lord Jesus. Whoever wants to observe the contract in the pure truth that is contained in the Gospel, must have an excellent Councillor who knows and opens his mind to the daily understanding of the whole Word. Without this Divine counsellor that is the Holy Spirit, the heart will gradually detach from the truth, lose contact with it, find itself chasing falsehoods and doing works that do not belong to God, because they are not life in the Word and for the Word. The mercy of God is the grace that grants us to sign with him the contract to have the eternal reward. We know that He is faithful to the contract. It is up to us to respect it forever.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints, make us faithful to the word given.

## THE SON OF MAN MUST SUFFER GREATLY

## Dt 30,15-20; Ps 1; Lk 9,22-25

### 15 FEBRUARY

The Lord's people awaited a Messiah in the manner of David, free from all slavery or foreign enslavement and victorious over every people. That reality was not according to expectations, is immediately manifested by some episodes that deserve our attention. In the Gospel according to Luke, the first to speak of the suffering or martyrdom of the Messiah is the Old Simeon, even if in an indirect way. By prophesying martyrdom in the soul of the Mother of Jesus, he includes her in the Son's holocaust.

*The child's father and mother were amazed at what was said about him; and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted (and you yourself a sword will pierce) so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed" (Lk 2,33-35).*

That suffering had fallen on Jesus, can already be seen from his first speech in the synagogue of Nazareth. The people want to throw him off the cliff. Another sign is given by the scribes and the Pharisees. These already discuss on how to shut him up forever. His "remarks" in questioning and responding, put them in a bad light.

*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 (Lk 4,28-30). 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 (Lk 6,6-11).*

In the first part of the Gospel, everything is veiled. From chapter nine on, Jesus speaks openly to his of his suffering, the rejection of the elders and his being killed and subsequent resurrection on the third day. Up to this moment people saw Jesus either as John the Baptist, or as Elijah, or as one of the ancient prophets who rose again. Peter confesses that Jesus is the Christ of God, the messiah of the Lord.

*Once when Jesus was praying in solitude, and the disciples were with him, he asked them, "Who do the crowds say that I am?" They said in reply, "John the Baptist; others, Elijah; still others, 'One of the ancient prophets has arisen.'" Then he said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter said in reply, "The Messiah of God." He rebuked them and directed them not to tell this to anyone (Lk 9,18-21).*

Now it becomes more than fair to say what awaits the Christ of God and to prepare the disciples' hearts to overcome the scandal of passion and death. It is in this context that we speak of the cross, albeit in a veiled way. If the disciple is called to take his cross, it is an evident sign that Jesus too will have to take his own. If the disciple has to renounce, lose his life, even the Master must lose it for the eternal kingdom.

*He said, "The Son of Man must suffer greatly and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed and on the third day be raised."*

*Then he said to all, "If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. What profit is there for one to gain the whole world yet lose or forfeit himself?*

The life of Jesus is a whole work conceived by the eternal wisdom of the Father in his Holy Spirit. Every word of revelation is given in its time, neither a second before, nor a second later. Now the disciples must be prepared for the scandal of the cross.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints make us love our cross.

## WHEN THE BRIDEGROOM IS TAKEN AWAY FROM THEM

## Is 58,1-9a; Ps 50; Mt 9,14-15

### 16 FEBRUARY

Sometimes we cannot always respond with fullness of truth, revealing thoughts and hearts, or deep feelings, or plans to be implemented. The other does not understand. The right answer requires some knowledge: the heart of those who ask and the purpose for which the other asks. Moreover, the speaker must possess the will of God on him and also the times and the modalities of its fulfilment or realization. Nicodemus goes at night to Jesus and the Lord reveals to him the whole mystery of the rebirth of water and of the Holy Spirit together with the mystery of his death. He will be like the copper serpent, raised in the centre of the camp. But he is lifted up physically and not just symbolically.

The disciples of John ask Jesus why he lets his disciples behave differently than them, who are well taught by John on the fast, and also than the disciples of the Pharisees, who are also excellent masters of the tradition of the fathers. They are faithful to the rules of fasting, while his own just do not care. A teacher must pay all attention to the ancient rules, otherwise in the eyes of the people he loses credibility. If you do not watch Jesus, you are not a good teacher. Let us immediately say that Jesus did not come to restore or renew the traditions of the fathers, his mission is very different: He was sent to recreate the work of the Father which is man. He is from the Father and for the Father. It is not from men and for men.

This truth is humanly inconceivable to them, revealing it would not have been understood. Jesus is obliged to give an answer. He is the Master and if questioned he must always respond with wisdom, intelligence and according to truth. He bypasses the obstacle. He declares to them that non-fasting is only temporary. It is as if one participated in a wedding party. Of course we do not go to fast, but to rejoice with the spouses. Now it is as if his disciples were at a party. They cannot fast. Then the party will end and they will fast. The answer serves not only to reveal the truth, but above all to bring peace in the hearts, so that Jesus can continue without hindrance his mission for the re-establishment of the Father's Lordship in every heart, after having been recreated, renewed, purified and sanctified in him.

*Then the disciples of John approached him and said, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast (much), but your disciples do not fast?" Jesus answered them, "Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.*

This is the true mission of Jesus: making his Father shine in every heart, showing him in his full truth of love, justice, holiness and fidelity to his every Word. No need to live according to the tradition of the ancients, if then God does not live and does not reign in the hearts. The same rule applies to every disciple of Jesus. He is sent to the world for one purpose: making Christ, his mystery be known, which must become our mystery in him, with him and through him. This truth must be the soul and the spirit of every work of ours, just as it was the soul and spirit of the apostle Paul.

*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 3,8-14).*

Every disciple of Jesus realizing himself in Christ teaches by showing how everyone can and must be fulfilled. Removed Christ from the eyes, everything else is vain.

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

## THOSE WHO ARE HEALTHY DO NOT NEED A PHYSICIAN

## Is 58,9b-14; Ps 85; Lk 5,27-32

### 17 FEBRUARY

Jesus does not look with the eyes of the flesh. But always with the eyes of the Father, connected with the wisdom and intelligence of the Holy Spirit, so that through his every word and work only the will of God is fulfilled. That Jesus lives only as a witness of the Father, it is he himself who first declares it to Pilate and then from the cross, when he makes the world know that in him every prophetic word, every oracle and every promise of the father has been fulfilled. If the whole of the Old Testament is fulfilled in Christ, it is from Christ now that we must begin. Jesus is the new starting point of all creation. We could thus paraphrase the first verse of Genesis: "In the beginning the Father created the Cross and his Crucified Son, so that we all became in his image and likeness, realizing Him, his death and resurrection in our life".

*So Pilate went back into the praetorium and summoned Jesus and said to him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Do you say this on your own or have others told you about me?" Pilate answered, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests handed you over to me. What have you done?" Jesus answered, "My kingdom does not belong to this world. If my kingdom did belong to this world, my attendants (would) be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not here." So Pilate said to him, "Then you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say I am a king. For this I was born and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice." Pilate said to him, "What is truth?" (Jn 18,33-38).* *After this, aware that everything was now finished, in order that the scripture might be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I thirst." There was a vessel filled with common wine. So they put a sponge soaked in wine on a sprig of hyssop and put it up to his mouth. When Jesus had taken the wine, he said, "It is finished." And bowing his head, he handed over the spirit (Jn 19,28-30).*

Levi is declared an incurable sick by scribes and Pharisees. Jesus passes and attests to the whole world that there are no incurable sick people. Only the one who does not want to be healed is incurable. On the strength of this experience of healing, tomorrow Levi will have to go to every man and witness to them that we can heal, we can be cured, we can get out of every slavery of sin and we can free ourselves from every vice, even from concupiscence.

*After this he went out and saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at the customs post. He said to him, "Follow me." And leaving everything behind, he got up and followed him. Then Levi gave a great banquet for him in his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were at table with them. The Pharisees and their scribes complained to his disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" Jesus said to them in reply, "Those who are healthy do not need a physician, but the sick do. I have not come to call the righteous to repentance but sinners."*

The one who has understood well the mystery of Levi's vocation is Paul. His experience as a sinner, even if by zeal, constitutes him proclaimer of the great mystery of God's mercy, manifested entirely in his life. God is mercy for Paul.

*I am grateful to him who has strengthened me, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he considered me trustworthy in appointing me to the ministry. I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and an arrogant man, but I have been mercifully treated because I acted out of ignorance in my unbelief. Indeed, the grace of our Lord has been abundant, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. This saying is trustworthy and deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Of these I am the foremost. But for that reason I was mercifully treated, so that in me, as the foremost, Christ Jesus might display all his patience as an example for those who would come to believe in him for everlasting life. To the king of ages, incorruptible, invisible, the only God, honour and glory forever and ever. Amen (1Tm 1,12-17).*

Every disciple of Jesus is a healed from Him, a purified and washed in his blood. He is one who every day must remain immersed in the blood of Christ to keep himself clean. Since he is a healed by Jesus, he must testify to every man that healing is possible. The Gospel is truth if it is made personal testimony. I have been healed.

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

## TEMPTED BY SATAN

## Gn 9,8-15; Ps 24; 1 Pt 3,18-22; Mk 1,12-15

### 18 FEBRUARY – I SUNDAY OF LENT – B

Today, a persuasive thought of Satan twists and creeps in the Church of God. With *"gentle sweetness, affability, delicacy"*, far from any *"rudeness and aggressiveness"* of the possession of the body, he is insinuating in many minds and too many hearts his non-existence together with the non-existence of hell and eternal perdition. With his word of lies, always passed off as a very pure truth, he has by now conquered the believing world, including the Catholic world, that God is only mercy, against all the Scriptures which affirms the same thing, but which adds that mercy is grasped on the tree of conversion and faith in the Gospel of Christ the Lord.

If Satan does not exist, if mercy alone saves us, if conversion serves to nothing, if faith in the Gospel is irrelevant to the possession of eternal life, the Gospel offered today for our reflection is a fairy tale, a fable, a pious story, without any impact on our lives. If Satan does not exist, Jesus has not been tempted. Non-existence cannot tempt. If conversion and not even faith in the Gospel are no longer necessary, why should we read the Word of God in our liturgies? It makes no sense to read that Jesus was tempted, that he overcame the temptations, that he calls us to conversion, which requires faith in his Gospel. Everyone will understand that there is no correspondence between what is read and what is taught.

Another great folly. It has been declared that *"in front of God there is the equal dignity of every sexual tendency"*. However, one forgets to add that the dignity of man, of every man, is in the Holy Law of God, in the divine and eternal will, in the Word that has been delivered to us. Every disorderly tendency must be brought into the truth of the Commandment, of the Word and of the Statutes of the Lord. We find the same principle on which the affirmation of the non-existence of Satan and of the Lord's mercy alone is based. The exclusion of the Gospel as the only principle of eternal truth for us. But then in our liturgies we speak of hell, eternal perdition, conversion and faith in the Gospel. We go out of the liturgy and we say the opposite of what we have confessed. Evidently something is wrong, does not work, either in us or in the Gospel. Since I personally believe that I am a failure, that I am the one that does not work, I firmly believe in the Holy Spirit that the Gospel is the only true Word that exists in the world. Darkening the Gospel produces more damage than if the sun was darkened.

*At once the Spirit drove him out into the desert, and he remained in the desert for forty days, tempted by Satan. He was among wild beasts, and the angels ministered to him. After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God: "This is the time of fulfilment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."*

In the New Testament not only the existence of the devil is affirmed, but it is also taught that many men are his children. Jesus called devil one of his apostles and sons of the devil all those who with strength of mind were determined to kill him.

*Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you twelve? Yet is not one of you a devil?" He was referring to Judas, son of Simon the Iscariot; it was he who would betray him, one of the Twelve (Jn 6,70-71).* *I tell you what I have seen in the Father's presence; then do what you have heard from the Father." They answered and said to him, "Our father is Abraham." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing the works of Abraham. But now you are trying to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God; Abraham did not do this. You are doing the works of your father!" (So) they said to him, "We are not illegitimate. We have one Father, God." Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and am here; I did not come on my own, but he sent me. Why do you not understand what I am saying? Because you cannot bear to hear my word. You belong to your father the devil and you willingly carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in truth, because there is no truth in him» (Cf. 8,30-47).*

If the devil does not exist, Christ is a false witness of invisible realities. Eternal sadness!

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

## DEPART FROM ME, YOU ACCURSED, INTO THE ETERNAL FIRE

## Lv 19,1-2.11-18; Ps 18; Mt 25,31-46

### 19 FEBRUARY

Every disciple of Jesus is obliged to question and answer himself without any tergiversation, deception, lie, suspension or postponement of the answer: "Is this Word of Jesus - *"Go away from me, cursed, in eternal fire, prepared for the devil and for his angels"*- true or false? Is it fulfilled or not fulfilled? Is it a fable like all our fables or is it a tremendous eternal reality? We cannot answer tomorrow, nor in a year, nor should we wait for the Church to convene an Ecumenical Council to settle the question. The answer must be given now, immediately, instantly, because now, at this moment I can die and at this moment the Lord could say to me: *"Away, away from me, cursed, in the eternal fire, prepared for the devil and for the his angels"*. Since death does not wait for the question to be resolved, it comes and takes away, for this reason it is necessary that the answer is given immediately, instantly, without delay, or procrastination. Immediate death and immediate answer.

If I believe that this word of Jesus is true, then I must necessarily prepare myself for this meeting, living of corporal and spiritual works of mercy, so as to prepare my eternal future. If mercy towards thirsty, hungry, naked, imprisoned, ill and stranger Christ, opens the doors of eternal bliss, then I would be truly foolish, if I missed this opportunity. These works are the key to entering the eternal kingdom. I'll carry them out, I'll give myself the key and I enter. I do not do them, I remain without a key, the eternal gates of hell will open for me. If I do not believe in this Word of Jesus, if I consider it a fairytale, if I think that by now God himself is only mercy for all, without any need for conversion or faith in the Gospel, then that it is right or unjust, good or bad, it does not matter. In the evening of life, the gates of the kingdom of God will likewise open wide.

*"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?' And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.' Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, a stranger and you gave me no welcome, naked and you gave me no clothing, ill and in prison, and you did not care for me.' Then they will answer and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison, and not minister to your needs?' He will answer them, 'Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me.' And these will go off to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."*

I can also say that this story is a fairy tale. But if this story is a fairytale, since the Sermon on the Mount ends with the same, identical word of Jesus, then I have to believe that that Discourse is also a fable. However, since it is the essence of the message of Christ the Lord, I must conclude that living or not living it, is the same thing. What is the use of refraining from desiring a woman in order not to commit adultery with the heart, if then in the end there will be, without any repentance, any conversion, or faith in the Gospel, eternal life? If you then think that all of Scripture is this truth, then there is seriously something to think about. Everyone is obliged to give himself an answer, even taking responsibility for his own damnation.

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

## HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME

## Is 55,10-11; Ps 33; Mt 6,7-15

### 20 FEBRUARY

Without the right faith in the Word of the Lord, even prayer is transformed into falsehood, lie and useless invocation. We say: "Hallowed be your name". How? Living the rules of perfect holiness manifested by God to his people both in the Commandments or Tablets of the Law and also in the *"Code of Holiness"*, of the Book of Leviticus, in chapters XVIII, XIX, XX. For us in the New Testament, disciples of Jesus, there is only one way to sanctify the name of the Lord: living the whole Discourse of the Mountain contained in chapters V, VI, VII of the Gospel according to Matthew. If I have to sanctify his name, certainly his Law is the only way. I leave the Law, the name is not sanctified. Today the name of God is not sanctified. Even in his name, against his revelation and manifestation, the opposite of what He has said is affirmed, opening the doors to all sin, immorality, sacrilege and blasphemy even against the Holy Spirit. It is indeed true blasphemy against the Holy Spirit to affirm salvation without any merit on our part. Such a presumption is an unpardonable sin.

The same truth also applies to the other two invocations or requests: *"Thy kingdom come and Thy will be done"*. The kingdom of God is light that produces fruits of light. How can a Christian who lives immersed in the darkness proclaim himself the kingdom of God? How can an idolater, an immoral, one who walks from sin into sin think of himself as the kingdom of God, if the kingdom of God is victory over the kingdom of Satan, which is darkness and evil? But also how one can ask the Lord to do his will, if his will is his Law, his Commandments, his Statutes and his Gospel. If today we are declaring that there is no need for any conversion either of faith in the Gospel in the name of a mercy that covers everything, excuses all and forgives it all, without either repentance and not faith, abolishing every Word of God, what do we mean: *"Thy will be done?"*. Certainly not obedience to all his Word. For us: *"Thy will be done"*, by now has only one meaning: *"Always cover us with your mercy, forgive all our sins"*. We forget to say that mercy as a cover does not exist in God. There exists mercy as a new creation, regeneration, elevation, sanctification and perfect conformation to Lord Jesus. God is merciful because he grants us the grace of being his sons of adoption and partakers of his divine nature in his Son Christ the Lord. But today the Gospel suffers a universal, very heavy desertification. It is being deprived of every trace, even minimal, of eternal truth.

*In praying, do not babble like the pagans, who think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them. Your Father knows what you need before you ask him.  "This is how you are to pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and do not subject us to the final test, but deliver us from the evil one. If you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions.*

If the first three requests fall by overturning the *"Law of Mercy"*, of all other requests, the only one that maintains its value is the first and directly concerns our body: *"Give us today our daily bread"*. All other invocations are devoid of any meaning. While the Lord's mercy covers everything, we are in need of bread. Hunger is not covered by mercy. It is real. For bread we must pray. But the Heavenly Father gives bread to those who live in his house. His house is the Gospel, it is the Word of Jesus the Lord. The house of God is Christ Jesus. One dwells in Christ, one heart is formed with Him, one thought, one desire, one becomes a single Word, the Kingdom of God is built and bread is always given. We remain outside of Christ, we leave for distant countries, we have to graze pigs, without even being able to eat their carobs. The heresy has made our Father false.

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

**FEBRUARY 2018**

## THIRD DECADE OF FEBRUARY

## AT THE JUDGMENT

## Jon 3,1-10; Ps 50; Lk 11,29-32

### 21 FEBRUARY

Jesus calls his generation evil. The reason for such a great accusation is undoubtedly their unwillingness to open themselves to faith in his word, despite the many signs of truth already given to them. They claim, indeed they demand from Him a sign so great as to annul all their doubt and uncertainty, forgetting however that faith is born of the Word and not of the sign. We listen to the Word, we immediately see the truth contained in it and we accept it as the truth of our life. Between a less good word and a better word, one must always accept the best word. Never is faith in the sign. It is always in the Word. The sign can help faith, but it can never replace the Word. In fact, conversion is not at the sign but at the Word of the Lord.

Jonah, sent by God to Nineveh to announce that the city had just a forty day time to convert, before being destroyed; it immediately dressed the sack, made penance, stopped doing the evil done so far. It was forgiven. It was not destroyed. Yet the prophet had said very few words: *"Forty days more and Nineveh will be destroyed"*. The inhabitants did not ask for signs to the sent by the Lord. They examined their conduct, saw the evil of their deeds, returned to good, and stopped offending the Lord. The Word of the Lord speaks to the heart. The heart sees the evil and falsehoods that are in it. It decides to be purified from what is displeasing to the Lord and what is displeasing is revealed by the announced Word. The generation is evil because its heart is of stone. Not only. It is also gangrenous in evil. It can neither see nor think about good anymore.

Even the Queen of the South moved from her distant country and came to Solomon only to listen to his wisdom. She received no miracle, no sign, but only words of light and truth from the king. This is why both Nineveh and the Queen of the South will be the accusers with God against this generation on the day of judgment. They believed without any sign. This generation, despite having seen signs in great quantity, has closed in its pride of sin and its immoral arrogance. Another truth to be added is that the Word of Jesus is different from every other word hitherto resounded in history. It is full of the Holy Spirit and it is also enough a crack in the heart as the eye of a needle for it to enter and put a life in turmoil. Jesus told the Samaritan woman a simple word and the Woman was transformed into his missionary in an instant. If one does not believe before the Word uttered by Jesus, then it is a sign that the heart is imprisoned in sin, in wickedness and in evilness.

*While still more people gathered in the crowd, he said to them, "This generation is an evil generation; it seeks a sign, but no sign will be given it, except the sign of Jonah. Just as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so will the Son of Man be to this generation. At the judgment the queen of the south will rise with the men of this generation and she will condemn them, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and there is something greater than Solomon here. At the judgment the men of Nineveh will arise with this generation and condemn it, because at the preaching of Jonah they repented, and there is something greater than Jonah here.*

Jesus is greater than Jonah and greater than Solomon, not only because of his divinity, but also because of the power of the Holy Spirit with whom he always works. If his Mother goes to Zechariah's house and only with the sound of her voice pours on Elizabeth and John still in the breast the Holy Spirit, let us imagine with what power Jesus did not speak. His Spirit pierced the hearts, renewed and attracted them to him, but always provided that there was also a very small crack to enter them. From the obstinate and perverse, wicked and evil hearts not only was he rejected, to the Word of Jesus they were opposed with a blind will of suppression. The Word is given. In the judgment after death everyone must give an account to the Eternal Judge of its welcome and its non-acceptance. Its non-acceptance produces the fruit of perdition forever.

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

## BUT WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM?

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

### 22 FEBRUARY

The world will always have a thousand thoughts on Christ the Lord, a thousand ideas, a thousand falsehoods and a thousand approximations. Everyone will say of him what his mind, not enlightened by the Holy Spirit, suggests him. In fact, people see something, but not according to truth. They sees by approximation: *"Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah and others Jeremiah or some of the prophets."* In all these visions there is also much approximation in relation to the already revealed truth. People do not feed on the truth that is in the Word. They read the Word, but not according to its truth. This risk always comes from the Gospel. One can also refer to the Gospel, but ignoring its truth, the one placed in every Word by the Holy Spirit. It was yesterday, it is today, it will be tomorrow and always like this. We know that in the time of Jesus they were able to deprive even the Commandments of their truth.

*Now when the Pharisees with some scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around him, they observed that some of his disciples ate their meals with unclean, that is, unwashed, hands. (For the Pharisees and, in fact, all Jews, do not eat without carefully washing their hands, keeping the tradition of the elders. And on coming from the marketplace they do not eat without purifying themselves. And there are many other things that they have traditionally observed, the purification of cups and jugs and kettles (and beds).) So the Pharisees and scribes questioned him, "Why do your disciples not follow the tradition of the elders*[*3*](http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0839/__PW9.HTM#$3EM)*but instead eat a meal with unclean hands?" He responded, "Well did Isaiah prophesy about you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honours me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; In vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines human precepts.' You disregard God's commandment but cling to human tradition." He went on to say, "How well you have set aside the commandment of God in order to uphold your tradition! For Moses said, 'Honour your father and your mother,' and 'Whoever curses father or mother shall die.' Yet you say, 'If a person says to father or mother, "Any support you might have had from me is qorban"' (meaning, dedicated to God), you allow him to do nothing more for his father or mother. You nullify the word of God in favour of your tradition that you have handed on. And you do many such things" (Mk 7,1-13).*

If all the Lord's people, the whole world can do this, that is, to give non-truth to the Word of God, who never will have to do this are the Apostles of the Lord and their successors. They must always give every disciple of Jesus and the whole world the purest Word of Christ Jesus, the purest Gospel, the purest mystery of their Master. They are the ones responsible for the light of Christ, his truth, his grace and his holiness. If they turn into darkness, the light of Christ is extinguished and the people of God and the world are corroded, consumed and destroyed by all falsehood. Jesus does not care what people think, but he wants to know exactly what they think of Him. From this moment on their full formation on his mystery begins. Christ is the light of the Apostles, the Apostles are light of the Gentiles and of the Church. Their mediation is essential.

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

What is Peter's role concerning the light of Christ and his mystery? Always confessing Christ in his full, perfect truth, according to every illumination of the Holy Spirit. Confirming every other Apostle of Jesus the Lord in this faith. He is the rock of stability in the faith of the whole Church. This is why he is asked to love the Master more than all the others. Growing up in love he grows in the knowledge of the mystery and will always be able to announce it in its purest essence. Thus, Peter becomes the polar star of faith. You look at Him, you know the true faith. Thus Christ Jesus wanted it.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels, Saints make us from the right faith of Peter.

## YOU WILL NOT ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

## Ez 18,21-28; Ps 129; Mt 5,20-26

### 23 FEBRUARY

Today there is a very serious temptation that confuses the minds and hearts of all. We want to put God's mercy against the Law and the Law against mercy. In doing so, we certify that we do not know what either the Law or even mercy is. Thus we become children of ignorance, but also great fathers of it. It's as if one put bread against the hard work of the field. A piece of bread donated is mercy. But one must never forget that it is also the fruit of the hard work of the farmer. If we separate bread and work, we have our society today. Everything is wanted in it, everything is claimed, but it is ignored that everything that is desired and claimed is the sweat of others' blood. What then is mercy? The real sweat of blood of Jesus the Lord who produced the gift of grace, of the Holy Spirit, of forgiveness, of reconciliation, of redemption, of salvation and of the opening of the kingdom of God.

What is the sweat of the farmer that produces the mercy of bread? It is obedience to the Law of the Lord that established, after the sin of the origins, a perennial exchange between the earth and man. Man gives his sweat to the earth, the earth will give him bread. If man does not give his sweat, not even the earth will give its bread. The perennial law of humanity. It is valid in every field. Man will give his sweat. The earth will produce its fruits. If man does not sweat, the earth does not produce. Christ Jesus has sweated blood, God has produced salvation. Now the blood must be produced by his body like sweat. The body of Christ produces the sweat of blood, God gives salvation and redemption to humanity. This truth is thus taught by Paul to the Colossians.

*Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ on behalf of his body, which is the church, of which I am a minister in accordance with God's stewardship given to me to bring to completion for you the word of God, the mystery hidden from ages and from generations past. But now it has been manifested to his holy ones, to whom God chose to make known the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; it is Christ in you, the hope for glory. It is he whom we proclaim, admonishing everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. For this I labour and struggle, in accord with the exercise of his power working within me (Col 1,24-29).*

What is the law? It is the Word of Christ Jesus to whom we must obey, just as man obeys the earth, if we want to transform our life into a field in which the seed of God's mercy, which is Christ Jesus, matures for us, bearing fruits of true salvation and redemption for us and for the whole world. Today Jesus tells us how our body must be worked and transformed: into a real field in which full respect for every man grows. Respect must be attested by keeping us away from all evil towards others, but also from the words of truth, holiness, forgiveness used in his favour. Never must a word come out of the mouth that in any way can be offensive.

*I tell you, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter into the kingdom of heaven. "You have heard that it was said to your ancestors, 'You shall not kill; and whoever kills will be liable to judgment.' But I say to you, whoever is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment, and whoever says to his brother, 'Raqa,' will be answerable to the Sanhedrin, and whoever says, 'You fool,' will be liable to fiery Gehenna. Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Settle with your opponent quickly while on the way to court with him. Otherwise your opponent will hand you over to the judge, and the judge will hand you over to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. Amen, I say to you, you will not be released until you have paid the last penny.*

There is no opposition, contrast, divergence between Law and mercy, because obedience to the Law, that is, to the Word of Jesus, is the tree on which mercy matures. The tree is cut off, its fruits die. The Law is abandoned, man no longer produces mercy. It is the truth of Christ. It must be the truth of the disciple.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints, free us from all ignorance.

## AS YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER IS PERFECT

## Dt 26,16-19; Ps 118; Mt 5,43-48

### 24 FEBRUARY

The perfection of God is to remain immutable in his nature of goodness, truth, justice, fidelity. It is his nature that cannot be transformed into something else. Being the eternal nature of good, it remains eternally nature of good, without any variation. This truth is announced both by Paul as well as by James and the Apostles of the Lord.

*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 (2Tm 2,3-13).* *Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers: all good giving and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no alteration or shadow caused by change. He willed to give us birth by the word of truth that we may be a kind of first fruits of his creatures (Jm 1,16-18).*

God is holiness by eternal nature. Man is corrupt nature by disobedience and sin. How can a man be of a holy nature, if he is in corruption and passes from corruption to corruption? Our God, by his great and infinite mercy, in his Holy Spirit, in the body of Christ, has made us partakers of the divine nature. Remaining in the body of Christ, growing in it in the participation of the divine nature, little by little he also becomes immutable nature in the good and becomes perfect as God is perfect. But how do we remain in the body of Christ, to remain in God, to share in his nature in an ever fuller way? Abiding in the Word of Jesus.

*Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him. Anyone who does not remain in me will be thrown out like a branch and wither; people will gather them and throw them into a fire and they will be burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you. By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love (Jn 14,23; 15,6-10).*

Thus, the Law, the Word become the house in which to live for all the days of our life. Living in this house, we live in Christ, we grow in participation of the divine nature. We become perfect as our God is perfect in love and truth.

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

If we place ourselves outside the Word, the Law of truth and perfect justice, we are outside of Christ; if we are outside of Christ we are also outside of God, our corrupt nature takes over and obscures the new nature. Instantly we become voluble, partial and superficial in the good. Our thoughts are also transformed. When nature is transformed, everything is transformed in us. As nature in Christ, we think according to the thoughts of Christ, as corrupt nature, we think thoughts of corruption, falsity and sin. If you are not in Christ, never might you think according to Christ and never might you be perfect as God.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints make us of a perfect nature in God.

## HE WAS TRANSFIGURED BEFORE THEM

## Gn 22,1-2.9a.10-13.15-18; Ps 115; Rm 8,31b-34; Mk 9,2-10

### 25 FEBRUARY – II SUNDAY OF LENT – B

Moses stayed with the Lord on the mountain for forty days. He descended among his people and his face was radiant. Who looked at him, remained as if struck by lightning. For this reason he covered himself with a veil, which he took away only when he entered the sanctuary, before the Lord. There are no other similar events. It is the one and only.

*As Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the commandments in his hands, he did not know that the skin of his face had become radiant while he conversed with the Lord. When Aaron, then, and the other Israelites saw Moses and noticed how radiant the skin of his face had become, they were afraid to come near him. Only after Moses called to them did Aaron and all the rulers of the community come back to him. Moses then spoke to them. Later on, all the Israelites came up to him, and he enjoined on them all that the Lord had told him on Mount Sinai. When he finished speaking with them, he put a veil over his face. Whenever Moses entered the presence of the Lord to converse with him, he removed the veil until he came out again. On coming out, he would tell the Israelites all that had been commanded. Then the Israelites would see that the skin of Moses' face was radiant; so he would again put the veil over his face until he went in to converse with the Lord (Ex 34,29-35).*

On the mountain, Peter, James and John are not in front of some ray of light that attested that Jesus was with God or that God was with Jesus. Jesus is all a figure of light, a person of light, like God is light. This is why the Evangelist Mark takes care to affirm: *"His clothes became shining, very white: no washer man on earth could make them so white"*. The intensity of the light serves to reveal the great difference that reigns between Moses and Jesus. Moses is radiant in the face. Jesus is all light. For a few moments the light hides the flesh and He appears in all his splendour. A first conclusion is imposed: If Jesus is so close to God, it is right that He be listened to infinitely more than Moses. If that of Moses was the Word of God, much more of God must be his Word. The difference in light is also a difference of perfection in the truth. The word of Moses is true and fully true is his Word. Moses and Elijah themselves, who are beside Him as witnesses to the Law and the Prophets, testify that the Word of Jesus is very pure truth. What the Law and the Prophets say, the Master will have to realize it. For this reason he is going to Jerusalem.

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

We come out of the proper order of "logical", rational, deductive and argumentative conclusions of the faith, now we enter into the very pure revelation of confirmation. The Father makes his voice be heard from the cloud, declares that Jesus is his Son, the beloved. He is his Messiah. If he had stopped without saying anything more, everything would have remained in the rigor of logical deductions, instead the Father adds a word: "Listen to him!", which breaks the patterns of logic - even if it confirms all of them - because it is full confirmation of the truth of death by crucifixion of Lord Jesus. What the Apostles heard from the mouth of Jesus is very pure truth. Nothing must be doubted. All discussion, all uncertainty end, a new path must be taken. Now we must think of the Cross of Jesus as the only way to realize his mission as Christ of God. How this will be possible, it will be known when everything has been accomplished. However, the way is the cross.

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

## FOR THE MEASURE WITH WHICH YOU MEASURE

## Dn 9,4b-10; Ps 78; Lk 6,36-38

### 26 FEBRUARY

The Old Testament had already placed man as a measure for forgiveness. He will be forgiven, the one who forgives. Those who do not forgive cannot ask the Lord for any forgiveness.

*The vengeful will suffer the Lord’s vengeance, for he remembers their sins in detail. Forgive your neighbour’s injustice; then when you pray, your own sins will be forgiven. Should a man nourish anger against his fellows and expect healing from the Lord? Should a man refuse mercy to his fellows, yet seek pardon for his own sins? If he who is but flesh cherishes wrath, who will forgive his sins? Remember your last days, set enmity aside; remember death and decay, and cease from sin! Think of the commandments, hate not your neighbour; of the Most High's covenant, and overlook faults (Sir 28,1-7).*

 In the Book of Tobit almsgiving receives its consecration. Nothing is more life-giving for man on the land than almsgiving. It is called a precious gift before God.

*"Through all your days, my son, keep the Lord in mind, and suppress every desire to sin or to break his commandments. Perform good works all the days of your life, and do not tread the paths of wrongdoing. For if you are steadfast in your service, your good works will bring success, not only to you, but also to all those who live uprightly. "Give alms from your possessions. Do not turn your face away from any of the poor, and God's face will not be turned away from you. Son, give alms in proportion to what you own. If you have great wealth, give alms out of your abundance; if you have but little, distribute even some of that. But do not hesitate to give alms; you will be storing up a goodly treasure for yourself against the day of adversity. Almsgiving frees one from death, and keeps one from going into the dark abode. Alms are a worthy offering in the sight of the Most High for all who give them (Tb 4,5-11).*

The Book of Wisdom offers God to man as a model of indulgence. With his omnipotence he could reduce all humanity to nothing. Instead He works only in view of repentance. The Lord works all so that the man is converted and returns to enjoy life.

*But as you are just, you govern all things justly; you regard it as unworthy of your power to punish one who has incurred no blame. For your might is the source of justice; your mastery over all things makes you lenient to all. For you show your might when the perfection of your power is disbelieved; and in those who know you, you rebuke temerity. But though you are master of might, you judge with clemency, and with much lenience you govern us; for power, whenever you will, attends you. And you taught your people, by these deeds, that those who are just must be kind; And you gave your sons good ground for hope that you would permit repentance for their sins (Wis 12,15-19).*

What does Lord Jesus add to this already established doctrine? He places his Father as the only model of mercy to whom one must always look. Only God is the model of man. Man is always an incomplete model. God is always perfect.

*Be merciful, just as (also) your Father is merciful. "Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven. Give and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap. For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you."*

But what is the specificity of God's mercy? It is the gift of his Only Son from the cross, as the Crucifix. Now if the Father gives us Christ Crucified and all himself in Him for our life, might there be anything that man does not have to give for the life of his brothers. Even if he also let himself be crucified for the supreme good of the world and donated all his substances, he would still not give anything. Christ also gave his flesh, his blood, his Holy Spirit and all the eternal life of the Father. If man is called to be merciful like his Father in heaven, then the whole of the Old Testament skips. God had not died yet for man. In the New Testament God dies for man and in this death, for this death, he also gives his resurrection and eternal inheritance. Until we will not have *"given our flesh to be eaten and our blood to be drunk"*, we will have always done little to imitate our God and Lord. The Father's mercy is always unreachable. But he must be imitated.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints, teach us true mercy.

## YOU ARE ALL BROTHERS

## Is 1,10.16-20; Ps 49; Mt 23,1-12

### 27 FEBRUARY

Jesus reveals to his disciples that false religion can always creep into the true religion. If false religion is insinuated, even the Word turns theology, morality, asceticism, worship and all life into falsehood and lies. It is the only problem of true religion: never becoming a false religion. In the Old Testament it was the Lord, through his prophets, who always watched, corrected, warned and brought the true religion back into its purity. In the New Testament, spreading the children of light in every corner of the earth, it is up to the apostles and their successors to ensure so that this does not happen, but also it is incumbent on every single disciple of Jesus the serious obligation to keep in the true religion, otherwise it is believed not only in vain, but also sinfully, because the body of Christ and his life are destroyed. St. Paolo sees the collapse of this transformation and immediately intervenes promptly. All his Letters have only one purpose: giving back to religion its truth, transformed into falsehood in a very rapid time. It was enough that Moses went up to the mountain to speak with the Lord and immediately, in a single day, the true religion became idolatry.

*When the people became aware of Moses' delay in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said to him, "Come, make us a god who will be our leader; as for the man Moses who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has happened to him." Aaron replied, "Have your wives and sons and daughters take off the golden earrings they are wearing, and bring them to me." So all the people took off their earrings and brought them to Aaron, who accepted their offering, and fashioning this gold with a graving tool, made a molten calf. Then they cried out, "This is your God, O Israel, who brought you out of the land of Egypt." On seeing this, Aaron built an altar before the calf and proclaimed, "Tomorrow is a feast of the LORD." Early the next day the people offered holocausts and brought peace offerings. Then they sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to revel (Ex 32,1-6).*

St. Paul notes that the communities he founded either had already passed or were about to pass to the false religion. Turning to Galatians, that is what he tells them, with the power of the Holy Spirit.

*You were running well; who hindered you from following (the) truth? That enticement does not come from the one who called you. A little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough. I am confident of you in the Lord that you will not take a different view, and that the one who is troubling you will bear the condemnation, whoever he may be. For you were called for freedom, brothers. But do not use this freedom as an opportunity for the flesh; rather, serve one another through love. For the whole law is fulfilled in one statement, namely, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." But if you go on biting and devouring one another, beware that you are not consumed by one another. I say, then: live by the Spirit and you will certainly not gratify the desire of the flesh. For the flesh has desires against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; these are opposed to each other, so that you may not do what you want (Cf. Gal 5,1-26).*

True religion is very pure obedience to the Word of God, of Christ Jesus. One comes out of the Word, one does not obey it and one is already in false religion, false faith. Who is the brother for the brother? He is the one who redeems him, but also serves him from the true faith.

*Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to his disciples, saying, "The scribes and the Pharisees have taken their seat on the chair of Moses. Therefore, do and observe all things whatsoever they tell you, but do not follow their example. For they preach but they do not practice. They tie up heavy burdens*[*3*](http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0839/__PVW.HTM#$37T)*(hard to carry) and lay them on people's shoulders, but they will not lift a finger to move them. All their works are performed to be seen. They widen their phylacteries and lengthen their tassels. They love places of honour at banquets, seats of honour in synagogues, greetings in marketplaces, and the salutation 'Rabbi.' As for you, do not be called 'Rabbi.' You have but one teacher, and you are all brothers. Call no one on earth your father; you have but one Father in heaven. Do not be called 'Master'; you have but one master, the Messiah. The greatest among you must be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled; but whoever humbles himself will be exalted.*

 Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints make us brothers of one another.

## TO GIVE HIS LIFE AS A RANSOM FOR MANY

## Jer 18,18-20; Ps 30; Mt 20,17-28

### 28 FEBRUARY

It suffices to change one thought and your whole life changes. Satan knows very well that everything is from thought and because of this, at night and during the day he works to change the thoughts of men. Let's say it right away: true thought is only that of God, manifested, revealed and contained in his Word that is well written and codified. One comes out of the Word, one is in falsehood, in lies, in deception and in death. The sons of Satan know this well and by every means they go to conquest of the thought of men, in every field and in every sector of life. Today they use threats, psychological terrorism, piety or mercy, compassion, goodness and the same Word of the Lord, deprived of its truth, to conquer thought.

Even Jesus knows that everything is from thought and that is why he begins his Gospel by offering his thought and asking for conversion to it. One gets converted to his thought, contained in his Word and becomes his disciples. He comes out of his thought, He does not consider us his disciples and does not know us. He will not even welcome us into his eternal dwellings. We have not followed his example, we have not walked his ways. The Apostles walk behind Jesus, but they still do not know all his thoughts. They know the moral thought, they do not know yet the political and governmental thought. Not knowing it, they go after Jesus with their old political thoughts. The request of the mother of the sons of Zebedee made to Jesus to allow James and John to sit in his kingdom one on his right and one on his left, is a political thought according to the Old Testament. New realm, new political thought, new thinking of government and new thought of service.

Jesus takes this opportunity to reveal his disciples what his new political thought is. In his new kingdom he is not great who commands, but rather he who serves. He is not the first one who sits on his right or on his left, but he who occupies the last place to love with humility and great availability all those who are above him. Let us take the image of a pyramid. In the new kingdom of Jesus not the stone that is at the summit is the largest, but the one that is hidden in the earth and which bears the weight of the whole building. It is a greatness invisible to men, an eternal greatness of inestimable value with God. The whole building holds on that stone.-

*As Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve (disciples) aside by themselves, and said to them on the way, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death, and hand him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and scourged and crucified, and he will be raised on the third day." Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee approached him with her sons and did him homage, wishing to ask him for something. He said to her, "What do you wish?" She answered him, "Command that these two sons of mine sit, one at your right and the other at your left, in your kingdom." Jesus said in reply, "You do not know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup that I am going to drink?" They said to him, "We can." He replied, "My cup you will indeed drink, but to sit at my right and at my left (, this) is not mine to give but is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father." When the ten heard this, they became indignant at the two brothers. But Jesus summoned them and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and the great ones make their authority over them felt. But it shall not be so among you. Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you shall be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave. Just so, the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many."*

Christ Jesus is the stone that holds the whole building of the Kingdom of God. He made himself the last of all. He has stripped himself of everything. He let himself to be crucified. He gave his life as a ransom for everyone. This is his new political thought: handing his life over to God so that he makes of him a holocaust and a sacrifice of salvation and redemption. Mind you: it is not the man who gives himself to man. Man gives himself to God. God gives him to men from his will. The disciple of Jesus does not serve man from his heart. He serves him from the heart of the Father and that is why he must give himself to the Father. If he gives himself, he is no longer from himself.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels and Saints, make us holocaust for the Father.