**In favor of your tradition**

**TUESDAY FEBRUARY 9 (Mk 7, 1-13)**

From his first word, the prophet Isaiah denounces a cult without any truth in it: *“What care I for the number of your sacrifices? says the LORD. I have had enough of whole-burnt rams and fat of fatlings; In the blood of calves, lambs and goats I find no pleasure. When you come in to visit me, who asks these things of you? Trample my courts no more! Bring no more worthless offerings; your incense is loathsome to me. New moon and sabbath, calling of assemblies, octaves with wickedness: these I cannot bear. Your new moons and festivals I detest; they weigh me down, I tire of the load. When you spread out your hands, I close my eyes to you; Though you pray the more, I will not listen. Your hands are full of blood! Wash yourselves clean! Put away your misdeeds from before my eyes; cease doing evil; learn to do good. Make justice your aim: redress the wronged, hear the orphan's plea, defend the widow.”* (Is 1,11-17). As the prophet speaks to his people, he reveals to them that his whole life is not pleasing to the Lord, because it is made up of non-obedience to His Word, to his Law, to his Covenant. The Lord wants only one thing from his people: that they obey all his Word. Everything is in the Word and everything must happen in obedience to the Word. If the Word is not obeyed, nothing has value with God. Without obedience, God is not the Lord of man. It is this truth that was not valid only for yesterday, it is valid for today and forever. Every man belongs to the Lord. But when does he belong to the Lord? When he does His will. When does he obey his God? When he lends Him the cult of listening and submission.

*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 honors 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, 'Honor 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 favor of your tradition that you have handed on. And you do many such things."*

The true worship that the Lord has asked of his people is obedience to his Word. But not only obedience to the Word heard at the Sinai, the day the Covenant was stipulated, but obedience to every subsequent Word that the Lord would have made resound through his prophets. We know that the long stay in the desert served this purpose: so that Israel would learn to listen to the Lord, who, like a shepherd, led his people towards the promised land. The Lord is always the Shepherd and He must always be listened to. Pharisees and scribes instead replaced listening to their Shepherd with the practice of a tradition made up of precepts of men. This tradition excluded God both as a true Shepherd and also as God and Lord of the people. In place of the Word of God there was the word of men, to which every obedience was given, even when it annulled the Law of the Covenant and every Word given by God through his prophets. That of the scribes was a religion of idolaters and immoral people. It was this religion that nailed Christ Jesus to the cross. An idolater does not love the true God. In the name of its idol it kills all who carry the true God.

Mother of the Redemption, Angels, Saints, let us never become idolaters and immoral.