**Guard against the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod!**

**TUESDAY FEBRUARY 16 (Mk 8, 14-21)**

Jesus does not want disciples cloaked in false religion, interwoven with precepts that are of men, disguised as the purest law of the Lord. Neither he wants followers who spend their days in immorality. The Apostle Paul has fiery words against those who destroy the body of Christ with their sin: *“Your boasting is not appropriate. Do you not know that a little yeast leavens all the dough? Clear out the old yeast, so that you may become a fresh batch of dough, inasmuch as you are unleavened. For our paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed. Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people, not at all referring to the immoral of this world or the greedy and robbers or idolaters; for you would then have to leave the world. But I now write to you not to associate with anyone named a brother, if he is immoral, greedy, an idolater, a slanderer, a drunkard, or a robber, not even to eat with such a person. For why should I be judging outsiders? Is it not your business to judge those within? God will judge those outside. "Purge the evil person from your midst."* *Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take Christ's members and make them the members of a prostitute? Of course not! (Or) do you not know that anyone who joins himself to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For "the two," it says, "will become one flesh." But whoever is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Avoid immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the immoral person sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been purchased at a price. Therefore, glorify God in your body.” (1Cor 5,6-13;6,15-20).* The Yeast has such a great fermentation strength that in a short time a large quantity of unleavened dough becomes leavened. The same applies to the Christian community as well. One hypocrite or one immoral is enough that many others could copy his example. The one who is above must be the model of those who are below. The superior is obliged to always remain in the highest truth and morality.

*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?"*

The Apostle Paul who stands above wants everyone to imitate his example. As in him there are no imperfections, so also in no one else there must be imperfections: "*We cause no one to stumble**in anything, in order that no fault may be found with our ministry; on the contrary, in everything we commend ourselves as ministers of God, through much endurance, in afflictions, hardships, constraints, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, vigils, fasts; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, in a holy spirit, in unfeigned love, in truthful speech, in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness at the right and at the left; through glory and dishonor, insult and praise. We are treated as deceivers and yet are truthful; as unrecognized and yet acknowledged; as dying and behold we live; as chastised and yet not put to death; as sorrowful yet always rejoicing; as poor yet enriching many; as having nothing and yet possessing all things.” (2Cor 6,3-10).* If the one who is above falls into hypocrisy or immorality, he will never be able to be an example to those who are below. His preaching is in vain and his pastoral care will be devoured by the east wind of murmuring, gossip, and rumor.

Mother of the Redemption, Angels, Saints, let us never fall into these sins.