**Repent, and believe in the gospel**

**FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT FEBRUARY 21 (Mk 1, 12-15)**

The desert is the place where man learns to listen to the Lord, to trust Him, to walk with Him, listening to His voice and obeying it: "***Be careful to observe all the commandments I enjoin on you today, that you may live and increase, and man enter in and possess the land which the LORD promised on oath to your fathers. Remember how for forty years now the LORD, your God, has directed all your journeying in the desert, so as to test you by affliction and find out whether or not it was your intention to keep his commandments. He therefore let you be afflicted with hunger, and then fed you with manna, a food unknown to you and your fathers, in order to show you that not by bread alone does man live, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of the LORD. The clothing did not fall from you in tatters, nor did your feet swell these forty years. So you must realize that the LORD, your God, disciplines you even as a man disciplines his son. Be careful not to forget the LORD, your God, by neglecting his commandments and decrees and statutes which I enjoin on you today. But if you forget the LORD, your God, and follow other gods, serving and worshiping them, I forewarn you this day that you will perish utterly. Like the nations which the LORD destroys before you, so shall you too perish for not heeding the voice of the LORD, your God."* (Cfr. Dt 8, 1-20**).The life of man - both for the soul, the spirit and the body - belongs entirely to the Lord and it is for the Lord. How can it be of the Lord? It belongs to the Lord if it also is from the Lord. The life is from the Lord when it is lived by his will that is manifested in His Word. Whoever is not from the Lord can never belong to the Lord. If we are not of the Lord, our life is doomed to failure both on earth and in the eternity. This is a universal truth.

Given that Jesus is true man as well as true God, He is also tempted by Satan thus to live by Himself and for Himself, by getting rid of all connection with the Father, or that Jesus begins serving Satan, who will reward Him by giving him all kingdoms of this world. Satan is the father of lies and the inventor of it. He knows well that all the kingdoms of the world are already of Jesus by creation. Now they will have to be His for redemption. They will belong to Jesus if He is obedient to his Father until death and death by cross. Jesus cannot be by Himself. By nature, and by eternal sonship He is from the Father. Even for generation in time He is from the Father. Jesus cannot be from his own will, because He is from the will of the Father. Jesus cannot even be from different ways of salvation from those that the Father has revealed to Him. Even for the observance to an iota, Jesus is from the Father. How does He overcome all the temptations of Satan? He answers to Satan with His Father's Word, the written one, but with the whole Scripture and not just a verse of it. We too are tempted today to use just scripture verses: but the verse is not the whole scripture. The verse is from Satan, the whole Scripture is from God. Eternal truth.

*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 fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."*

What is the conversion to which Jesus calls us? It is a twofold conversion. The first conversion is from disobedience to obedience, from sin to grace, from foolishness to wisdom, from injustice to justice. This is the moral conversion. Then there is the other conversion: Theological or Christological or Evangelical or Ecclesial. This second conversion consists in accepting Christ as the true sent by the Father and as true Word of the Father, the true Word of eternal life. The Gospel and Christ Jesus are one. We are converted to the Gospel if we are converted to Christ. We are converted to Christ if we are converted to the Gospel. Today a conversion to God is preached without conversion to Christ and the Gospel. This is a false conversion. Never can Christ and the Gospel be excluded from true conversion. It is today’s temptation.

Mother of the Redemption, Angels, Saints, let us never fall into this temptation.