**Except the sign of Jonah**

**WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 24 (Lk 11,29-32)**

It is said in the Holy Scripture that, after receiving the command from the Lord to go to Nineveh to proclaim that their wickedness had come down to Him, Jonah refuses to obey and flees away from the Lord aboard a ship. A great storm hits the sea and Jonah confesses that he is the cause of such a great evil. So goes the story: *"What shall we do with you, "they asked," that the sea may quiet down for us? "For the sea was growing more and more turbulent. Jonah said to them, "Pick me up and throw me into the sea, that it may quiet down for you; since I know it is because of me that this violent storm has come upon you. "Still the men rowed hard to regain the land, but they could not, for the sea grew ever more turbulent. Then they cried to the LORD: "We beseech you, O LORD, let us not perish for taking this man's life; do not charge us with shedding innocent blood, for you, LORD, have done as you saw fit." Then they took Jonah and threw him into the sea, and the sea's raging abated. Struck with great fear of the LORD, the men offered sacrifice and made vows to him.*

*But the LORD sent a large fish, that swallowed Jonah; and he remained in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. From the belly of the fish Jonah said this prayer to the LORD, his God: Out of my distress I called to the LORD, and he answered me; From the midst of the nether world I cried for help, and you heard my voice. For you cast me into the deep, into the heart of the sea, and the flood enveloped me; All your breakers and your billows passed over me. Then I said, "I am banished from your sight! Yet would I again look upon your holy temple." The waters swirled about me, threatening my life; the abyss enveloped me; seaweed clung about my head. Down I went to the roots of the mountains; the bars of the nether world were closing behind me forever, But you brought my life up from the pit, O LORD, my God. When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the LORD; My prayer reached you in your holy temple. Those who worship vain idols forsake their source of mercy. But I, with resounding praise, will sacrifice to you; What I have vowed I will pay: deliverance is from the LORD. Then the LORD commanded the fish to spew Jonah upon the shore." (Jnh 1,11-2.11).*As Jonah remains three days and three nights in the belly of the fish, Jesus will remain three days and three nights in the womb of death. Then He will rise again and will be the sign of the truth of all His teachings. Nobody comes out of the belly of a fish and nobody comes out of the belly of death.

*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.*

But there is another sign that must be highlighted. Jonah in Nineveh made no sign. He only said a few words: *"Another forty days and Nineveh will be destroyed*.*"*At these words the whole city was converted. Not even Solomon made signs. The queen of Sheba came to hear his wisdom. Jesus is more than Jonah and more than Solomon. Jesus revealed himself as a true man of God with signs, miracles and wonders never seen or heard before. Jesus is Eternal Wisdom made flesh. Jonah and Solomon are like the flame of a wick when the oil is about to run out before the divine, eternal, uncreated Light that is Lord Jesus. Yet in the face of so much wisdom and so many miracles, the people remained deaf, insensitive. They want miracles, but not conversion. They ask for the salvation of the body, but not the one of the soul and spirit.

Mother of the Redemption, Angels, Saints, obtain for us the perfect conversion to the Gospel.