**Thursday 03 June – IX WEEK O.T. [B]**

**Jesus replied, "The first is this: 'Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is Lord alone! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'**

**Jesus replies to the scribe recalling two truths of the Ancient Scripture. The first truth is taken from the Deuteronomy and it is made up of three commands from the Lord. FIRST COMMAND: "Now, Israel, hear the statutes and decrees which I am teaching you to observe, that you may live, and may enter in and take possession of the land which the LORD, the God of your fathers, is giving you. In your observance of the commandments of the LORD, your God, which I enjoin upon you, you shall not add to what I command you nor subtract from it.” (Dt 4,1-2).**

**SECOND COMMAND: The laws to be observed are those set out in the two tablets of stone, written with the finger of God: "Hear, O Israel, the statutes and decrees which I proclaim in your hearing this day, that you may learn them and take care to observe them. The LORD, our God, made a covenant with us at Horeb; not with our fathers did he make this covenant, but with us, all of us who are alive here this day. The LORD spoke with you face to face on the mountain from the midst of the fire. Since you were afraid of the fire and would not go up the mountain, I stood between the LORD and you at that time, to announce to you these words of the LORD: 'I, the LORD, am your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, that place of slavery. You shall not have other gods besides me (Dt 5, 1,21).**

**THIRD COMMAND: It is the way according to which the Law of the Alliance is to be observed: "These then are the commandments, the statutes and decrees which the LORD, your God, has ordered that you be taught to observe in the land into which you are crossing for conquest, so that you and your son and your grandson may fear the LORD, your God, and keep, throughout the days of your lives, all his statutes and commandments which I enjoin on you, and thus have long life. Hear then, Israel, and be careful to observe them, that you may grow and prosper the more, in keeping with the promise of the LORD, the God of your fathers, to give you a land flowing with milk and honey. "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone! Therefore, you shall love the LORD, your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength. Take to heart these words which I enjoin on you today. Drill them into your children. Speak of them at home and abroad, whether you are busy or at rest. Bind them at your wrist as a sign and let them be as a pendant on your forehead. Write them on the doorposts of your houses and on your gates. (Dt 6, 1-9). There is no love without obedience. There is no obedience without Law. The Lord asks to obey his Law loving Him with all the heart, all the mind, all the strength. The obedience is not to the Law, but to the Lord who has given the Law. Love is not toward the Law but it is given to the Author of Law that is the Lord.**

**Thus this truth is announced by Christ Jesus: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of truth, which the world cannot accept, because it neither sees nor knows it. But you know it, because it remains with you, and will be in you. (Jn 14, 15-17). 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. "I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete. This is my commandment: love one another as I love you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. (Jn 15, 9-14)**

**If one loves the Lord, one walks in his will. If one does not love the Lord, one does not walk in his will. The Lord, his will, the codification of his will, the obedience to the Law, the love toward the Lord, are one only thing. They are no longer separated things. One loves the Lord according to his will. The will of the Lord is not to be imagined. Woe to whoever makes it two separate and distinct things.**

**The same principle is to be applied to the love toward the neighbour. Nothing in the love toward the neighbour should come from our will. Everything is instead set by the divine and eternal will. Loving the Lord is loving God’s will over the neighbour. The Ten Commandments dictate the love with which God asks man to love. Who must man love? He must love his Lord and the neighbour obeying to the Law of Alliance. Love toward the neighbour is revealed by the Lord, in the Ancient Law, particularly in the Chapters XVIII, XIX, XX of Leviticus. It concerns every relation. Here is one: "When an alien resides with you in your land, do not molest him. You shall treat the alien who resides with you no differently than the natives born among you; have the same love for him as for yourself; for you too were once aliens in the land of Egypt. I, the LORD, am your God. "Do not act dishonestly in using measures of length or weight or capacity. You shall have a true scale and true weights, an honest ephah and an honest hin. I, the LORD, am your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt. (Lev 19, 33-36). When one offends the neighbour, it is the Lord who gets offended, since it is his will that is trodden.**

**Let us read the text of Mk 12, 29b-34**

**One of the scribes, when he came forward and heard them disputing and saw how well he had answered them, asked him, "Which is the first of all the commandments?" Jesus replied, "The first is this: 'Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is Lord alone! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." The scribe said to him, "Well said, teacher. You are right in saying, 'He is One and there is no other than he.' And 'to love him with all your heart, with all your understanding, with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself' is worth more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices." And when Jesus saw that (he) answered with understanding, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And no one dared to ask him any more questions.**

**When David committed the grievous sin of adultery and the killing of the husband of the woman he had broken the Law of his God with, here is what the prophet Nathan said to him: “Why have you spurned the LORD and done evil in his sight?” (2Sam, 12, 9). Spurning the Word of the Lord is spurning the Lord. Thus said Jesus: “Whoever listens to you listens to me. Whoever rejects you rejects me. And whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me." (Lk 10, 16). Also the Apostle Paul announces the same truth: “This is the will of God, your holiness: that you refrain from immorality, that each of you know how to acquire a wife for himself in holiness and honor, not in lustful passion as do the Gentiles who do not know God; not to take advantage of or exploit a brother in this matter, for the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you before and solemnly affirmed. For God did not call us to impurity but to holiness. Therefore, whoever disregards this, disregards not a human being but God, who (also) gives his holy Spirit to you.” (1Ts 4,3-8)**

**Here is the teaching of the Apostle John: “We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, "I love God," but hates his brother, he is a liar; for whoever does not love a brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. This is the commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.” (1Jn 4, 10-21). True love is perfect obedience to the Lord, the eternal Source of true love.**

**May the Mother of the Lord help us love our God as She loved him.**