**THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 30 – XXVI WEEK O.T. [B]**

**"The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest.”**

**The harvest is always abundant. The laborers are always few. The one who sends the laborers in the harvest is the lord of harvest, namely our heavenly Father. Jesus wants each of his labourer to pray the Lord of harvest so that He sends laborers in his harvest. This prayer must be daily raised by every labourer who already works in the harvest of the Lord. It must be raised by the one who wants to be cured by the laborers, as well. Missionaries and beneficiaries must always pray so that the Lord takes care of his harvest with the sending of other numerous laborers. So that the Lord send laborers in his harvest, Jesus indicates only this way: the prayer incessantly raised to the Lord, to his heavenly Father. This prayer must also be inserted in every formulary of prayer. It must also be inserted in the personal structure of the prayer.**

**Can a lamb convert a wolf? It can if it is filled with all the strength of the grace and of the truth of Christ Jesus. It is all well and proper to read this word of Jesus in a messianic prospective. This prospective gives hope. The wolf can be converted. It is announced by the prophet Isaiah who sees it converted, he sees it overturned in its nature. Everyone can convert. Everyone can come back to the Lord. Everyone can unclothe the garment of the wolf and wear that of the sheep. The hope in the conversion of the wolves is the power of the missionary. It must also be his constant prayer and his martyrdom offered for the salvation of the ones who do not love the Lord.**

**Jesus wants his missionaries slim, free, with no burdens, with no hand fatigues, only intent on fulfilling the received mission. The missionary of Jesus cannot be fatigued, be worried, linger, indulge, be distracted, have the heart to other things. The missionary of Jesus is a person handed over the Providence of the Father. Today for today. Tomorrow for tomorrow. The present for the present. The future for the future. The missionary of Jesus is concerned for the things of the Father. The Father will deal with his things. The Father will feed him as he feeds the birds in the air and he will dress him as he dresses the grass of the field. The missionary of Jesus must have unlimited trust in the Providence of the Father. To it, he must entirely hand over. The missionary of Jesus is the man of the Word he proclaims and lives in simplicity, in slimness, in poorness, in freedom, with seriousness, without letting himself be distanced from it by convenient things, as well.**

**The world lies in death. One needs to give it life. This is the work of the missionary of Jesus. If he lingers on this or on that other thing of this world, if he stops to greet and be greeted, the day ends and the dead begins to emit filthy odour. This is the urgency that must prompt the missionary: the resurrection of hearts. To operate this resurrection he must walk with quickness, with freedom, with no burden, with no thought. Therefore, it is not about dressing, how to be dressed, being or not being clothed. It is instead most pure issue of freedom from every burden both material and spiritual, of mind, of body, of heart.**

**Let us read the text of Lk 10,1-12**

**After this the Lord appointed seventy (-two) others whom he sent ahead of him in pairs to every town and place he intended to visit. He said to them, "The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest. Go on your way; behold, I am sending you like lambs among wolves. Carry no money bag, no sack, no sandals; and greet no one along the way. Into whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this household.' If a peaceful person lives there, your peace will rest on him; but if not, it will return to you. Stay in the same house and eat and drink what is offered to you, for the laborer deserves his payment. Do not move about from one house to another. Whatever town you enter and they welcome you, eat what is set before you, cure the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God is at hand for you.' Whatever town you enter and they do not receive you, go out into the streets and say, 'The dust of your town that clings to our feet, even that we shake off against you.' Yet know this: the kingdom of God is at hand. I tell you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom on that day than for that town.**

**The missionary of Jesus must be a man free from his nourishment, as well. He must take what it is offered to him, without asking, without pretending, with no particular need. Jesus wants his missionaries to be people of great communion. They must be able to share the poorness, the littleness, the nothing of the people. They cannot go among people and not sharing their condition of poorness and littleness. It would be a great offence. They have to see that little they will receive as a mercy, or a reward for the work done. This has another great meaning. No one has the right to share the mess hall of the people if he does not carry out his missionary work, if he does not carries out his apostolic work well. It is a true problem of justice: a gift for a gift. The missionary gives the spiritual food and he receives the material food in turn. He feeds the spirit and the soul. The others offer him the nourishment for his body. Out of this stricter justice, no one has the right to share the mess hall of the others. If the missionary is received in a town, he can share the life of this town. The town receives the gift of the missionaries. The missionaries receive the gift of the town in terms of food and drink. One lives a communion of peace and of mutual welcoming.**

**In this town that receives, they must also do a double good: in body and in spirit. They must heal the sick they find in it. They must proclaim the coming of the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God comes with the preaching of the Gospel. The Gospel is the Word of God and it is also his work. The missionary of Jesus must take care of the entire man: of his body and of his spirit. Beware, however: he must take care of the entire man but in a spiritual way. In the same way as Jesus: with his only word that must be Word of Jesus. Word healing the body. Word healing the spirit. The unique instrument of salvation of the missionaries of Jesus is the Word. With the Word of Jesus, he heals both body and soul. When this truth is forgotten, then one is no longer missionary of Jesus. The form of the mission has been altered and also the mission will consequently result altered, modified, transformed.**

**But there is also the case in which in a town the missionary of Jesus is not received. What does he have to do when one does not welcome him? Jesus says it with extreme clarity: one has to abandon the town. One imposes the Gospel to no one. Neither one challenges men in order to be made martyrs of the Gospel and of the faith. One preaches the Gospel freely, one receives it freely. Whoever receives it enters the peace and the life. Whoever refuses it remains in his death and in his infinite wars. Leaving the town the disciple of Jesus must clearly show the rupture of communion.**

**Shaking the dust of the town that clings to the feet of the missionary of Jesus has one only aim, one only reason: showing the rupture of communion. Revealing the serious fault this town has taken because of the refused, not received Gospel. The refusal of the Gospel is not a small thing. It is the refusal of life and peace. The town must know what it refused. It must take every responsibility. All town must know that the kingdom of God is among them. They refused it. But just because of their refusal, it does not mean it is no longer at hand. It is always at hand and it is waiting for their conversion and faith in the Gospel. By doing this, the missionary of Jesus pours out every responsibility on the town. He remains without fault.**

**Why will it be more tolerable for Sodom than that town that refuses the missionary of Jesus? The greater is the gift made by God to a person, to a town, to a country and the greater is its responsibility. Sodom is responsible of having lived in an immoral way. The town that refuses the missionary of Jesus, to the immoral life, adds the refusal and the disdain of the gift of God made to it precisely to free it from its slavery of sin and to lead it into the greatest spiritual and moral elevation. Mother of God, help us. Make us understand our responsibility.**