**MONDAY DECEMBER 13 – III WEEK OF ADVENT [C]**

**"I shall ask you one question, and if you answer it for me, then I shall tell you by what authority I do these things. Where was John's baptism from? Was it of heavenly or of human origin?"**

**The eternal, divine, supernatural authority from whom every government is, is God, He alone. There is no authority on earth that is not participation of the divine authority, given by the Lord. The Genesis begins with this most pure truth. God, after having made man to his image and likeness, after having created him male and female, gives him the authority over all the works created by Him. Every authority exercised by man comes from this originary participation. Another truth to add: Jesus performs every mighty deed, every miracle, every healing. There is no illness that was not healed by Him. He has power even on death. This authority on creation directly comes from God.**

**It is not a power given to the nature of man. It is a power given to the single person directly by God. If the chief priests and the elders of the people knew God and the revelation, they would know that every authority is from God. Only the “authority” of doing evil comes from man. However, this is an abuse of his authority by nature. This authority is fruit of his sin. However, this is not authority for life, but for death. Jesus has authority only for life. Asking Jesus: “"By what authority are you doing these things? And who gave you this authority?" is a question of deep and total ignorance. We know, though, that those are moved by the will of doing evil to Jesus the Lord. Jesus heals as He can heal.**

**Jesus cannot reply that the authority has given to Him by God. They would immediately have accused Him with blasphemy. He would have been stoned immediately. He can neither say that authority comes from men. It would be a lie. Even in this case He would have been accused of deceit. Any reply Jesus had offered would have been turned against Him. He can get out of this situation only with the help of all the wisdom and intelligence of the Holy Spirit.**

**The Holy Spirit immediately comes to his rescue. He suggests modalities and forms. It is sufficient, to get out safely, to ask the chief priests and the elders of the people one only question. The reply of Jesus will depend on their reply: "I shall ask you one question, and if you answer it for me, then I shall tell you by what authority I do these things.” If they want a reply, they will have to answer. If they do not answer, Christ will not reply, either. It is divine wisdom. When one is in the Holy Spirit, the Spirit that knows all things, always intervenes with promptness and puts the right word on the mouth, that frees and saves. Without the Holy Spirit, no man will ever have the right word. This truth will never have to be forgotten. It will always have to be kept in the heart. Are you in the Spirit? Your word will be of salvation. Are you not in the Spirit? Your word will be of condemnation. Only the Word of the Spirit is of salvation.**

**The question of Jesus deals with the person and the mission of John the Baptist. Where was the baptism of John from? From heaven or from men? In other words: was John an insane fanatic or was he a person sent by God? Was what he preached and operated from his heart, willing and eager to create a movement of hope, enlivening the faith in the promised Messiah or was the mission entrusted to him by God, in his Holy Spirit? Has John made himself a prophet or was he consecrated prophet by the Lord? It is important that everyone knows who John is. If in him everything comes from earth, from men, from flesh, one has no obligation of listening. Instead, if his mission comes from Heaven and his words and works from the Spirit, then the listening must be given as one gives himself to God, as one gives himself to Moses and to all the Old Prophets. What comes from God is for the true salvation. The chief priests and the elders of the people need to discuss this among themselves to reply. They must measure every consequence of their reply, both affirmative and negative. Each of their word is full of a fruit against them. In fact, they evaluate every possible consequence of their reply. If they say that in John the baptism comes from heaven, from God, Jesus might reply to them, rather He will reply: ‘Why did you not believe him?' Since they did not believe in the preaching of John they cannot answer that his baptism came from heaven. What comes from heaven deserves our faith. God cannot speak to man vainly.**

**Let us read the text of Mt 21,23-27**

**When he had come into the temple area, the chief priests and the elders of the people approached him as he was teaching and said, "By what authority are you doing these things? And who gave you this authority?" Jesus said to them in reply, "I shall ask you one question, and if you answer it for me, then I shall tell you by what authority I do these things. Where was John's baptism from? Was it of heavenly or of human origin?" They discussed this among themselves and said, "If we say 'Of heavenly origin,' he will say to us, 'Then why did you not believe him?' But if we say, 'Of human origin,' we fear the crowd, for they all regard John as a prophet." So they said to Jesus in reply, "We do not know." He himself said to them, "Neither shall I tell you by what authority I do these things.**

**The other reply is that it was from men. In this case, they would have been against the crowds. In fact, they believed that John was a prophet. Now there is no true prophet unless from God. No true prophet comes from men. A man can make another man his prophet, he might never make him prophet of the living God. Only the Lord can constitute, raise, call the prophet of the living God. If the crowds consider John a prophet, he comes from God. But if John comes from God, even his baptism comes from heaven. Here is the wisdom of the Holy Spirit. While Jesus always replies to their questions with no answer, they do not reply to the question of Jesus with a reply. From the replies a man gives and from the questions he makes, one realises if he is in the Holy Spirit or if he is out of Him. Jesus in the replies with no answer always replies with great wisdom giving a truth that cannot be denied. Jesus, always in the Holy Spirit, asks a question to which one cannot give an answer. Not because there is no reply, but because any reply is opposite to the one who utters it.**

**The reply of the chief priests and of the elders of the people is against them, more than the two solutions evaluated by them. They say to Jesus not to know it. With this reply, one declares themselves useless people to God and to men. They are useless, rather harmful to God, as incapable of guiding his people. They are incapable of distinguish a shepherd from a mercenary, a false prophet from a true one, one who is sent by God and one who comes from earth, though. They are useless, rather harmful to men as they are incapable of defend them from every predatory wolf coming to maul, kill, devour. But they are also incapable of confirming in the truth those who come from the divine and heavenly truth. Who is charged of the guide of the people of the Lord – and chief priests and elders of the people are – if he reveals himself as not good at discernment and at separation of the truth from the falsity and of light from darkness, is of no use. Rather, he is very harmful.**

**If the chief priests and the elders of the people have declared themselves useless about the person of John the Baptist, they declare themselves useless about every other person. The light is one. Darkness is one. One cannot affirm that one does not know a light and that one knows the other light. As one cannot affirm that one does not know a darkness and that one knows the other one. Whoever does not know a darkness does not know darkness. It is of no use that Jesus says with which authority He operates. They have declared themselves useless in every discernment. If they do not know about John, they will neither know about Him. Revealing the origin of his authority is meaningless. Here is the true wisdom of the Holy Spirit: leading the chief priests and elders of the people to the declaration of total vanity, uselessness, inefficiency, danger. Truth does not rule in them, but the mood of their heart and of their mind. May the Mother of God come to our rescue. May She make us of true faith.**