**THURSDAY DECEMBER 30 – OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS [C]**

**And coming forward at that very time, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem.**

**Anne is a prophetess. The Holy Spirit has placed upon her, as well. She comes forward at that very time, too, and gives thanks to the Lord. She gives thanks to the Lord speaking about the child to all who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem. Jesus is introduced by Anne as the Redeemer of Jerusalem, its Liberator. We know the truth according to God to give this word “redemption” “liberation.” It is not about political, military redemption or liberation, a liberation from the occupying foreigner, but a liberation from sin, from ignorance, from the non-true and non-holy knowledge of God, of the true God. What happens in the temple is simply mind-blowing. There is total absence of the official world, of those who were the teachers, the priests, the saints of time. This world is filled with itself. This world has no need to wait for any Messiah. This world is with no wait and therefore with no hope. What hope can the one who has no hope in his heart instil into other hearts, since he is deprived of true wait?**

**The Lord uses these women, who consecrate their life to the Lord, to proclaim his mighty deeds and also to fulfil his works. Judith is surely a model of these women. Here is how she reports the faith in the God of the Fathers in the chiefs of her town: "Listen to me, you rulers of the people of Bethulia. What you said to the people today is not proper. When you promised to hand over the city to our enemies at the end of five days unless within that time the Lord comes to our aid, you interposed between God and yourselves this oath which you took. Who are you, then, that you should have put God to the test this day, setting yourselves in the place of God in human affairs? It is the Lord Almighty for whom you are laying down conditions; will you never understand anything? You cannot plumb the depths of the human heart or grasp the workings of the human mind; how then can you fathom God, who has made all these things, discern his mind, and understand his plan? "No, my brothers, do not anger the Lord our God. For if he does not wish to come to our aid within the five days, he has it equally within his power to protect us at such time as he pleases, or to destroy us in the face of our enemies. It is not for you to make the Lord our God give surety for his plans. "God is not man that he should be moved by threats, nor human, that he may be given an ultimatum. "So while we wait for the salvation that comes from him, let us call upon him to help us, and he will hear our cry if it is his good pleasure. For there has not risen among us in recent generations, nor does there exist today, any tribe, or clan, or town, or city of ours that worships gods made by hands, as happened in former days. It was for such conduct that our forefathers were handed over to the sword and to pillage, and fell with great destruction before our enemies. But since we acknowledge no other god but the Lord, we hope that he will not disdain us or any of our people. If we are taken, all Judea will fall, our sanctuary will be plundered, and God will make us pay for its profanation with our life's blood. For the slaughter of our kinsmen, for the taking of exiles from the land, and for the devastation of our inheritance, he will lay the guilt on our heads. Wherever we shall be enslaved among the nations, we shall be a mockery and a reproach in the eyes of our masters. Our enslavement will not be turned to our benefit, but the Lord our God, will maintain it to our disgrace.**

**"Therefore, my brothers, let us set an example for our kinsmen. Their lives depend on us, and the defense of the sanctuary, the temple, and the altar rests with us. Besides all this, we should be grateful to the Lord our God, for putting us to the test, as he did our forefathers. Recall how he dealt with Abraham, and how he tried Isaac, and all that happened to Jacob in Syrian Mesopotamia while he was tending the flocks of Laban, his mother's brother. Not for vengeance did the Lord put them in the crucible to try their hearts, nor has he done so with us. It is by way of admonition that he chastises those who are close to him." (Jdt 8, 11-27)**

**Let us read the text of Lk 2,36-40**

**There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived seven years with her husband after her marriage, and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple, but worshiped night and day with fasting and prayer. And coming forward at that very time, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem. When they had fulfilled all the prescriptions of the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.**

**Mary and Joseph fulfil all the prescriptions of the Law of the Lord in the temple of Jerusalem. What it prescribed has been fulfilled by them in fullness of obedience and submission. The family of Nazareth is a family living according to the Law, in the Law, with an adherence not just formal, but with all heart. The law is the will of God. The will of God must be fulfilled by loving it. Only the one who loves the will of God fulfils it with spirit of true obedience. Obedience and law must be one only thing in the fulfilment of the Law of the Lord. Now that everything has been fulfilled according to the law of God, they can go back home.**

**Jesus, Mary and Joseph return to Galilee, in their own town of Nazareth. The text does not say if they remained in the Judea until the fortieth day, or if they returned to Nazareth immediately after the birth of Jesus. Neither should one think of attempting to find a concordance with what Matthew states, as the Gospel according to Matthew has an entirely different theological and Christological perspective. Luke’s and Matthew’s perspective are totally different, as different is the truth one wants to teach and different are also the ways through which truth is taught. The beauty of the Gospel is precisely that: diversity removes nothing to truth, it make it full truth, instead, but with no possibility of concordance. Diversity in God is unity and unity diversity.**

**The child is true child. Humanity true humanity. What is the essence of true humanity? Its growth, its development, its fortification. That of Jesus is true human life, as true flesh, true spirit, true soul. Jesus grows and becomes strong, filled with wisdom. The fullness of wisdom is proportioned to his human growth. Jesus has always been filled with wisdom. At the age of six, He was filled with wisdom as much as a six-years child can contain it. Even at the age of three, Jesus was filled with wisdom. However, the difference is immense, very great. At the age of thirty, the fullness of wisdom has reached its highest, but not yet the perfection, that has been reached only at the moment of the death on the cross. Jesus is perennially guided by the grace of God that is above Him in the same way as the tent of light and the cloud that were always over Israel in its way toward in the desert toward the promised land.**

**Never for one moment, has grace abandoned Jesus. Never one only moment has Jesus forsaken to follow grace. Grace guided Him and Jesus let himself be guided. Grace kept Him and Jesus let himself be kept. Grace called Him and Jesus let himself be called. Grace prompted Him and He let himself be prompted. Jesus and grace are one only thing, always, in every moment. It is in reason of grace over Him that Jesus was always filled with wisdom. Jesus always knew to discern good from evil. Jesus always rejected evil and He always did good. What is wisdom, indeed? The four cardinal virtues: prudence, justice, fortitude, temperance. Jesus was perennially guided by these four virtues. Jesus is a true man. He lives as true man. He lives as true man as He is immersed in God’s grace and in fullness of the divine wisdom. May the Mother of God make us true prophets of her Son. We will proclaim the world his truth, without betraying it not even in one only jota. Amen.**