**SUNDAY JANUARY 09 – BAPTISM OF THE LORD [C]**

**After all the people had been baptized and Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, heaven was opened and the holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."**

**It urges to be careful not to combine the descent of Jesus in the water of the Jordan and the descent of the Holy Spirit over Christ Jesus in bodily form, as of dove. These are two separate and different moments, each of which bears its own truth. Jesus, descending in the Jordan, bears his humanity in the water, on which He had taken upon all the sins of the world and subjects it to the ritual of purification. In that water, He abandons his will, his thoughts, his desires, He empties himself entirely, annihilates in all his being so as to be ready to take all the Spirit of the Lord and all the will of the Father. It is in the water of the Jordan that his total annihilation of himself begins that will have his total annihilation also with the gift of his entire body on the cross, as the Apostle Paul reveals:** “**Who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross. Because of this, God greatly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”(Phil. 2. 6-11) If Jesus does not empty himself, He cannot be filled with God.**

**In the water of the Jordan, also the prophecy of the Psalm begins to be fulfilled: “Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but my ears you have opened burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not require. Then I said, “Here I am, I have come, it is written about me in the scroll. I desire to do your will, my God; your law is within my heart.” (Psal 40, 6-9) This prophecy, too, finds its perfect fulfilment on the cross, as the Letter to the Hebrews reveals:** “**For this reason, when he came into the world, he said: "Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me; holocausts and sin offerings you took no delight in. Then I said, 'As is written of me in the scroll, Behold, I come to do your will, O God.'" First he says, "Sacrifices and offerings, holocausts and sin offerings, you neither desired nor delighted in." These are offered according to the law. Then he says, "Behold, I come to do your will." He takes away the first to establish the second. By this "will," we have been consecrated through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” (Hb 10, 5-10) So that the sacrifice of Jesus’s life was always more perfect, the Father fills Him with his Holy Spirit and this is the second moment Jesus lives, not in the water of the Jordan, but beside, while He is in prayer.**

**Let us read the text of Lk 3,15-16.21-22**

**Now the people were filled with expectation, and all were asking in their hearts whether John might be the Messiah. John answered them all, saying, "I am baptizing you with water, but one mightier than I is coming. I am not worthy to loosen the thongs of his sandals. He will baptize you with the holy Spirit and fire. After all the people had been baptized and Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, heaven was opened and the holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."**

**Jesus is in prayer. He asks the Father that He lets his Holy Spirit descend over Him. Even this prayer will find its perfect fulfilment in the Garden of the Olives, when Jesus still asks the Father that He sends the Holy Spirit over Him with all his power, so that He may fulfil what He has already begun:** “**Then going out he went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him. When he arrived at the place he said to them, "Pray that you may not undergo the test." After withdrawing about a stone's throw from them and kneeling, he prayed, saying, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me; still, not my will but yours be done." (And to strengthen him an angel from heaven appeared to him. He was in such agony and he prayed so fervently that his sweat became like drops of blood falling on the ground.) When he rose from prayer and returned to his disciples, he found them sleeping from grief. He said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not undergo the test."(Lk 22, 39-46)**

**Every night Jesus asked the Father that He always renewed the gift of the Holy Spirit to bring the daily work that would have opened before Him soon. Jesus always asked and the Father always granted pouring out his Holy Spirit over Him. We can affirm that the entire earthly life of Jesus was an uninterrupted invocation to the Father so that He filled him with the Holy Spirit. If the Spirit is not perennially enlivened, asked, received, no one might never fulfil his mission. Here is what the baptism of Jesus is: full immersion of his entire being in the Holy Spirit to receive, from Him, every strength to carry out the will of the Father until death and to the death on the cross. This journey begins immediately after the baptism and ends when Jesus on the cross places his Spirit in the hands of his Father: “Father into your hands I commit my Spirit.” May the Mother of Jesus help us in the prayer. May She ask the Holy Spirit for us. Amen.**