**THURSDAY JANUARY 13 – FIRST WEEK O.T. [C]**

**Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand, touched him, and said to him, "I do will it. Be made clean." The leprosy left him immediately, and he was made clean.**

**Jesus has come on our earth to make known, reveal, show how great the compassion of the Father is. Here is how the Book of the Wisdom reveals how great our Father is in compassion and in forgiveness, but in view of repentance: “For not without means was your almighty hand, that had fashioned the universe from formless matter, to send upon them a drove of bears or fierce lions, Or new-created, wrathful, unknown beasts to breathe forth fiery breath, Or pour out roaring smoke, or flash terrible sparks from their eyes. Not only could these attack and completely destroy them; even their frightful appearance itself could slay. Even without these, they could have been killed at a single blast, pursued by retribution and winnowed out by your mighty spirit; But you have disposed all things by measure and number and weight. For with you great strength abides always; who can resist the might of your arm? Indeed, before you the whole universe is as a grain from a balance, or a drop of morning dew come down upon the earth. But you have mercy on all, because you can do all things; and you overlook the sins of men that they may repent. For you love all things that are and loathe nothing that you have made; for what you hated, you would not have fashioned. And how could a thing remain, unless you willed it; or be preserved, had it not been called forth by you? But you spare all things, because they are yours, O LORD and lover of souls,** **for your imperishable spirit is in all things! Therefore you rebuke offenders little by little, warn them, and remind them of the sins they are committing, that they may abandon their wickedness and believe in you, O LORD!” (Wis 11, 17. 12, 2)**

**Reading in the light of the compassion of the Father, who is always in view of repentance and of the true conversion to the Word of the Covenant – for us, disciples of Jesus, the conversion is to the Word of the Gospel – the healing of the leper is not only in view of the body health. It is infinitively more. It is a sign so that everyone accepts the Word of Jesus as true Word of God. After this healing, everyone, including the leper, should have made the same profession of faith made by the widow of Zarepath: “Some time later the son of the mistress of the house fell sick, and his sickness grew more severe until he stopped breathing. So she said to Elijah, "Why have you done this to me, O man of God? Have you come to me to call attention to my guilt and to kill my son?" "Give me your son," Elijah said to her. Taking him from her lap, he carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his own bed. He called out to the LORD: "O LORD, my God, will you afflict even the widow with whom I am staying by killing her son?" Then he stretched himself out upon the child three times and called out to the LORD: "O LORD, my God, let the life breath return to the body of this child." The LORD heard the prayer of Elijah; the life breath returned to the child's body and he revived. Taking the child, Elijah brought him down into the house from the upper room and gave him to his mother. "See!" Elijah said to her, "your son is alive." "Now indeed I know that you you are a man of God," the woman replied to Elijah. "The word of the LORD comes truly from your mouth." (1Kg 17, 17-24) Without this most pure confession of faith – "Now indeed I know that you, you are a man of God," - the miracle is deprived of its divine truth. One just makes a work as all the other works. One does not reach the true faith in the Word of Jesus through it and consequently one does not perform any conversion. Now the profession of the true faith in Christ and of the true conversion is the purpose of every work fulfilled by Jesus the Lord.**

**Let us read the text of Mk 1,40-45**

**A leper came to him (and kneeling down) begged him and said, "If you wish, you can make me clean." Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand, touched him, and said to him, "I do will it. Be made clean." The leprosy left him immediately, and he was made clean. Then, warning him sternly, he dismissed him at once. Then he said to him, "See that you tell no one anything, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses prescribed; that will be proof for them." The man went away and began to publicize the whole matter. He spread the report abroad so that it was impossible for Jesus to enter a town openly. He remained outside in deserted places, and people kept coming to him from everywhere.**

**The miracle, the sign, must lead to true faith and it is true faith when one confesses that on Jesus’s mouth, his Word is truth. Here is how Christ Jesus reaffirms this truth to his Apostle in the Cenacle:** “**Remember the word I spoke to you, 'No slave is greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. And they will do all these things to you on account of my name, because they do not know the one who sent me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin; but as it is they have no excuse for their sin. Whoever hates me also hates my Father. If I had not done works among them that no one else ever did, they would not have sin; but as it is, they have seen and hated both me and my Father. But in order that the word written in their law might be fulfilled, 'They hated me without cause.' (Jn 15, 20-25) Unfortunately, even today one wants the miracles, but not the true faith. May the Mother of Jesus help us for a true faith.**