**TUESDAY FEBRUARY 08 – V WEEK O.T. [C]**

**"Well did Isaiah prophesy about you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; In vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines human precepts.'**

**The Lord had given a well-precise command to the children of Israel through the means of Moses: nothing was to be added and nothing to be subtracted from it. The law has to be observed with all the heart, all the soul, all strengths. It is what is written in the Book of Deuteronomy: "Now, Israel, hear the statutes and decrees which I am teaching you to observe, that you may live, and may enter in and take possession of the land which the LORD, the God of your fathers, is giving you. In your observance of the commandments of the LORD, your God, which I enjoin upon you, you shall not add to what I command you nor subtract from it.” (Dt 4, 1-2)** **"These then are the commandments, the statutes and decrees which the LORD, your God, has ordered that you be taught to observe in the land into which you are crossing for conquest, so that you and your son and your grandson may fear the LORD, your God, and keep, throughout the days of your lives, all his statutes and commandments which I enjoin on you, and thus have long life. Hear then, Israel, and be careful to observe them, that you may grow and prosper the more, in keeping with the promise of the LORD, the God of your fathers, to give you a land flowing with milk and honey. "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone! Therefore, you shall love the LORD, your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength. Take to heart these words which I enjoin on you today. Drill them into your children. Speak of them at home and abroad, whether you are busy or at rest. Bind them at your wrist as a sign and let them be as a pendant on your forehead. Write them on the doorposts of your houses and on your gates.” (Dt 6, 1-19) The Pharisees and the scribes, instead, had abolished the Commandment of the Lord and they had introduced their tradition in its place. The commandments could be all transgressed, as long as the tradition was observed and what did it consist of? What the Gospel according to Mark refers is truly disturbing: “For the Pharisees and, in fact, all Jews, do not eat without carefully washing their hands, keeping the tradition of the elders. And on coming from the marketplace they do not eat without purifying themselves. And there are many other things that they have traditionally observed, the purification of cups and jugs and kettles (and beds).” One immediately understands that it is a religion made of purely exterior practices. The heart lacks. The soul lacks. The spirit lacks. In this religion, God and his Word lack.**

**Jesus refers to the prophecy of Isaiah. Here is what the Lord reveals through the means of his prophet to the children of Israel:** “**Be irresolute, stupefied; blind yourselves and stay blind! Be drunk, but not from wine, stagger, but not from strong drink! For the LORD has poured out on you a spirit of deep sleep. He has shut your eyes (the prophets) and covered your heads (the seers). For you the revelation of all this has become like the words of a sealed scroll. When it is handed to one who can read, with the request, "Read this," he replies, "I cannot; it is sealed." When it is handed to one who cannot read, with the request, "Read this," he replies, "I cannot read." The Lord said: Since this people draws near with words only and honors me with their lips alone, though their hearts are far from me, And their reverence for me has become routine observance of the precepts of men, Therefore I will again deal with this people in surprising and wondrous fashion: The wisdom of its wise men shall perish and the understanding of its prudent men be hid. Woe to those who would hide their plans too deep for the LORD! Who work in the dark, saying, "Who sees us, or who knows us?" Your perversity is as though the potter were taken to be the clay: As though what is made should say of its maker, "He made me not!" Or the vessel should say of the potter, "He does not understand." (Is 29, 9-16) It is a prophecy that leaves breathless. Man is deprived of every wisdom and intelligence.**

**Let us read the text of Mk 7,1-13**

**Now when the Pharisees with some scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around him, they observed that some of his disciples ate their meals with unclean, that is, unwashed, hands. (For the Pharisees and, in fact, all Jews, do not eat without carefully washing their hands, keeping the tradition of the elders. And on coming from the marketplace they do not eat without purifying themselves. And there are many other things that they have traditionally observed, the purification of cups and jugs and kettles (and beds).) So the Pharisees and scribes questioned him, "Why do your disciples not follow the tradition of the elders but instead eat a meal with unclean hands?" He responded, "Well did Isaiah prophesy about you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; In vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines human precepts.' You disregard God's commandment but cling to human tradition." He went on to say, "How well you have set aside the commandment of God in order to uphold your tradition! For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother,' and 'Whoever curses father or mother shall die.' Yet you say, 'If a person says to father or mother, "Any support you might have had from me is qorban"' (meaning, dedicated to God), you allow him to do nothing more for his father or mother. You nullify the word of God in favor of your tradition that you have handed on. And you do many such things."**

**Every disciple of Jesus must commit all himself so that he remains in the Word of the Gospel, if he wishes to be wise and intelligent, always.**