**MONDAY FEBRUARY 21 – VII WEEK O.T. [C]**

**When he entered the house, his disciples asked him in private, "Why could we not drive it out?" He said to them, "This kind can only come out through prayer."**

**Let us apply what happens in the desert to the disciples of Jesus:** “**At Rephidim, Amalek came and waged war against Israel. Moses, therefore, said to Joshua, "Pick out certain men, and tomorrow go out and engage Amalek in battle. I will be standing on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand." So Joshua did as Moses told him: he engaged Amalek in battle after Moses had climbed to the top of the hill with Aaron and Hur. As long as Moses kept his hands raised up, Israel had the better of the fight, but when he let his hands rest, Amalek had the better of the fight. Moses' hands, however, grew tired; so they put a rock in place for him to sit on. Meanwhile Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side and one on the other, so that his hands remained steady till sunset. And Joshua mowed down Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.” (Ex 17, 9-13) The disciples of Jesus are sent in the world to fight the great battle against Satan and his army of rebel angels. They might never defeat him with their only forces. They will have to be Moses and Joshua together. They will have to dwell together with God with an endless prayer and with the sword always in their hand on earth. When they detach the head from heaven even for one moment, Satan gets the better of them. Even when they do not fight against Satan, Satan will get the better of them.**

**Here is what Paul reveals about the great fight of the disciple of Jesus against Satan and his rebel angels:** “**Finally, draw your strength from the Lord and from his mighty power. Put on the armor of God so that you may be able to stand firm against the tactics of the devil. For our struggle is not with flesh and blood but with the principalities, with the powers, with the world rulers of this present darkness, with the evil spirits in the heavens. Therefore, put on the armor of God, that you may be able to resist on the evil day and, having done everything, to hold your ground. So stand fast with your loins girded in truth, clothed with righteousness as a breastplate, and your feet shod in readiness for the gospel of peace. In all circumstances, hold faith as a shield, to quench all (the) flaming arrows of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. With all prayer and supplication, pray at every opportunity in the Spirit. To that end, be watchful with all perseverance and supplication for all the holy ones and also for me, that speech may be given me to open my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel for which I am an ambassador in chains, so that I may have the courage to speak as I must.” (Eph 6, 10-20) Having received by Christ Jesus the power to drive out the unclean spirits is not enough so that it happens over the command of the Apostles. The Apostles are not those who have to drive out the unclean spirits. The Lord is the only one who can drive them out and this is why they must always invoke the Lord. Since the unclean spirit is always before the Apostles, they will always have to invoke the Lord. If the Lord is not invoked, He does not act and the unclean spirit does not listen to us. He does not listen to man, he only listens to God. Man invokes God. God comes, He commands the unclean spirit and he abandons man.**

**Let us read the text of Mk 9,14-29**

**When they came to the disciples, they saw a large crowd around them and scribes arguing with them. Immediately on seeing him, the whole crowd was utterly amazed. They ran up to him and greeted him. He asked them, "What are you arguing about with them?" Someone from the crowd answered him, "Teacher, I have brought to you my son possessed by a mute spirit. Wherever it seizes him, it throws him down; he foams at the mouth, grinds his teeth, and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive it out, but they were unable to do so." He said to them in reply, "O faithless generation, how long will I be with you? How long will I endure you? Bring him to me." They brought the boy to him. And when he saw him, the spirit immediately threw the boy into convulsions. As he fell to the ground, he began to roll around and foam at the mouth. Then he questioned his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" He replied, "Since childhood. It has often thrown him into fire and into water to kill him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us." Jesus said to him, " 'If you can!' Everything is possible to one who has faith." Then the boy's father cried out, "I do believe, help my unbelief!" Jesus, on seeing a crowd rapidly gathering, rebuked the unclean spirit and said to it, "Mute and deaf spirit, I command you: come out of him and never enter him again!" Shouting and throwing the boy into convulsions, it came out. He became like a corpse, which caused many to say, "He is dead!" But Jesus took him by the hand, raised him, and he stood up. When he entered the house, his disciples asked him in private, "Why could we not drive it out?" He said to them, "This kind can only come out through prayer."**

**Here is the great teaching Jesus gives his Apostles: “I have driven the unclean spirit out for I have asked my Father to drive it out. He has come and has driven it out. The unclean spirit owes Him every obedience. On the contrary, you have not prayed. You have thought that you had the power to drive it out. This is why you could not.” This law is valid for every disciple of Jesus. One does not drive out the unclean spirit except with the finger of God and the finger of God is only of God. He comes and works with his finger when we ask Him. May the Mother of Jesus help us in our prayer.**