**SATURDAY FEBRUARY 26 – VII WEEK O.T. [C]**

**"Let the children come to me; do not prevent them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.”**

**The child is the one who lives without past and without future. He lives the present. If we ask: who is the true example of the child in the Old Scripture? One should answer that the first example of child is Abraham at the moment of the sacrifice of Isaac. It is in this moment that Abraham is without past and without future. He only lives the present and makes a gift of it to God: Some time after these events, God put Abraham to the test. He called to him, "Abraham!" "Ready!" he replied. Then God said: "Take your son Isaac, your only one, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah. There you shall offer him up as a holocaust on a height that I will point out to you." Early the next morning Abraham saddled his donkey, took with him his son Isaac, and two of his servants as well, and with the wood that he had cut for the holocaust, set out for the place of which God had told him. On the third day Abraham got sight of the place from afar. When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. Next he tied up his son Isaac, and put him on top of the wood on the altar. Then he reached out and took the knife to slaughter his son. But the LORD'S messenger called to him from heaven, "Abraham, Abraham!" "Yes, Lord," he answered. "Do not lay your hand on the boy," said the messenger. "Do not do the least thing to him. I know now how devoted you are to God, since you did not withhold from me your own beloved son." As Abraham looked about, he spied a ram caught by its horns in the thicket. So he went and took the ram and offered it up as a holocaust in place of his son. Abraham named the site Yahweh-yireh; hence people now say, "On the mountain the LORD will see." Again the LORD'S messenger called to Abraham from heaven and said: "I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you acted as you did in not withholding from me your beloved son, I will bless you abundantly and make your descendants as countless as the stars of the sky and the sands of the seashore; your descendants shall take possession of the gates of their enemies, and in your descendants all the nations of the earth shall find blessing - all this because you obeyed my command.'' (cf Gen 22, 1-18)**

**Another great example of child is Ruth. She forgets the past. She expects nothing from the future. She consecrates her life putting herself at the service of her mother-in-law so far lonely and advanced in age:** “**Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go back, each of you, to your mother's house! May the LORD be kind to you as you were to the departed and to me! May the LORD grant each of you a husband and a home in which you will find rest." She kissed them good-bye, but they wept with loud sobs, and told her they would return with her to her people. "Go back, my daughters!" said Naomi. "Why should you come with me? Have I other sons in my womb who may become your husbands? Go back, my daughters! Go, for I am too old to marry again. And even if I could offer any hopes, or if tonight I had a husband or had borne sons, would you then wait and deprive yourselves of husbands until those sons grew up? No, my daughters! my lot is too bitter for you, because the LORD has extended his hand against me." Again they sobbed aloud and wept; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law good-bye, but Ruth stayed with her. "See now!" she said, "your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and her god. Go back after your sister-in-law!" But Ruth said, "Do not ask me to abandon or forsake you! for wherever you go I will go, wherever you lodge I will lodge, your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Wherever you die I will die, and there be buried. May the LORD do so and so to me, and more besides, if aught but death separates me from you!" (Rut 1, 8-17) Whoever wants to be child for the kingdom must, he too, unclothe oneself of his past and his future and hand every moment over to his God and Lord. One must live the present as a most pure gift of God. Even the present of cross and of sufferance must one live as a gift of God. Without the handover of our life to the Lord one might never become children for the kingdom. Our many thoughts and our many expectations prevent us.**

**Let us read the text of Mk 10,13-16**

**And people were bringing children to him that he might touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this he became indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to me; do not prevent them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Amen, I say to you, whoever does not accept the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it." Then he embraced them and blessed them, placing his hands on them.**

**The unique and sole model of child for the kingdom of heavens for us is Christ Jesus. He handed himself over entirely, in spirit, in soul, in body, offering himself to the Father in sacrifice to expiate the sins of the world: “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) Such higher model was not given to us and an even higher one might never be given. May the Mother of Jesus help us make ourselves children for the kingdom of God.**