**WEDNESDAY MARCH 02 – SACRED ASHES [C]**

**But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right is doing, so that your almsgiving may be secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you.**

**Lent begins with a great teaching from the Church. Every faithful in Christ and above all every priest in Christ must teach every disciple of Jesus how to sanctify every moment of his life. When will this be possible? Doing all things for the greatest glory of God. When can one do all things for the greatest glory of God? When one lives the entire Word of Christ Jesus. One cannot pray for the greatest glory of God, one cannot even fast and one can neither gives alms if one does not live the Law Christ Jesus has given to us. What the Lord said to the children of Israel is also valid for every Christian: “What care I for the number of your sacrifices? says the LORD. I have had enough of whole-burnt rams and fat of fatlings; In the blood of calves, lambs and goats I find no pleasure. When you come in to visit me, who asks these things of you? Trample my courts no more! Bring no more worthless offerings; your incense is loathsome to me. New moon and sabbath, calling of assemblies, octaves with wickedness: these I cannot bear. Your new moons and festivals I detest; they weigh me down, I tire of the load. When you spread out your hands, I close my eyes to you; Though you pray the more, I will not listen. Your hands are full of blood! Wash yourselves clean! Put away your misdeeds from before my eyes; cease doing evil; learn to do good. Make justice your aim: redress the wronged, hear the orphan's plea, defend the widow. Come now, let us set things right, says the LORD: Though your sins be like scarlet, they may become white as snow; Though they be crimson red, they may become white as wool. If you are willing, and obey, you shall eat the good things of the land; But if you refuse and resist, the sword shall consume you: for the mouth of the LORD has spoken!” (Is 1, 11-20) Praying with impure heart and with hands filled with every injustice might never be a prayed pleased to the Lord. Giving alms with the blood taken from brothers is not a thing pleased to the Lord, either.**

**Jesus reveals another worm that makes prayer, together with alms and fast, vain. This worm is called pride, arrogance, vainglory. A disciple of Jesus might even be pure of heart and righteous in his actions with prefect obedience to the Law of his Lord. However, he must pay very careful attention so that no thought neither of arrogance, nor of pride, nor of vainglory enters his mind. This happens when one gives alms or one prays or one fasts to receive some glory by men. In this case, Jesus says, since we did all things for our glory and not for the glory of God, our heavenly Father must not give us any reward. We have already received our reward. The Father owes nothing to us. What is the fruit of these actions: they have no value for our eternal life. We laboured vainly and foolishly. We have turned all into smoke. Not working for the glory that comes from God is great foolishness.**

**Let us read the text of Mt 6,1-6.16-18**

**"(But) take care not to perform righteous deeds in order that people may see them; otherwise, you will have no recompense from your heavenly Father. When you give alms, do not blow a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets to win the praise of others. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right is doing, so that your almsgiving may be secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you. "When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, who love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on street corners so that others may see them. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you.** **"When you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites. They neglect their appearance, so that they may appear to others to be fasting. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you may not appear to be fasting, except to your Father who is hidden. And your Father who sees what is hidden will repay you.**

**Thus the Apostle Paul teaches this divine truth to the Corinthians: “So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God. Avoid giving offense, whether to Jews or Greeks or the church of God, just as I try to please everyone in every way, not seeking my own benefit but that of the many, that they may be saved.” (1Cor 10, 31-33) And here what he says to the Romans: “I urge you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship. Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.” (Rm 12, 1-2) Here is the purpose we must give to the entire Lent: “Turning our life into an offer pleased to the Lord. Doing all things for the greatest glory of God. However, this is possible only dwelling and growing in the obedience to each Word of Christ Jesus. May our Mother help us so that our entire life is an offer pleased to the Lord with every obedience to his will.**