**THURSDAY 03 MARCH – AFTER THE SACRED ASHES [C]**

**"The Son of Man must suffer greatly and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed and on the third day be raised."**

**Jesus does not want his disciples and whoever follows Him to have erroneous thoughts about the journey toward Jerusalem He is taking on with firm decision. In the Holy Town all the Prophetic Scriptures resounded by his Father will be fulfilled, through the work of the Holy Spirit. The prophecy of Isaiah comes to define Christ Jesus as the spurned of men: “Who would believe what we have heard? To whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? He grew up like a sapling before him, like a shoot from the parched earth; There was in him no stately bearing to make us look at him, nor appearance that would attract us to him. He was spurned and avoided by men, a man of suffering, accustomed to infirmity, One of those from whom men hide their faces, spurned, and we held him in no esteem. Yet it was our infirmities that he bore, our sufferings that he endured, While we thought of him as stricken, as one smitten by God and afflicted. But he was pierced for our offenses, crushed for our sins, Upon him was the chastisement that makes us whole, by his stripes we were healed. We had all gone astray like sheep, each following his own way; But the LORD laid upon him the guilt of us all. Though he was harshly treated, he submitted and opened not his mouth; Like a lamb led to the slaughter or a sheep before the shearers, he was silent and opened not his mouth. Oppressed and condemned, he was taken away, and who would have thought any more of his destiny? When he was cut off from the land of the living, and smitten for the sin of his people, A grave was assigned him among the wicked and a burial place with evildoers, Though he had done no wrong nor spoken any falsehood.” (Is 53, 1-9) All this Word will have to be fulfilled in Jerusalem. Word of humiliation, not word of triumph. Word of refusal, not word of acclamation.**

**But also the other Word of the prophecy will be fulfilled, for the prophecy is one, not two. It is prophecy of humiliation and of death, but it is also prophecy of exaltation and of life: “(But the LORD was pleased to crush him in infirmity.) If he gives his life as an offering for sin, he shall see his descendants in a long life, and the will of the LORD shall be accomplished through him. Because of his affliction he shall see the light in fullness of days; Through his suffering, my servant shall justify many, and their guilt he shall bear. Therefore I will give him his portion among the great, and he shall divide the spoils with the mighty, Because he surrendered himself to death and was counted among the wicked; And he shall take away the sins of many, and win pardon for their offenses.” (Is 53, 10-12) One is the prophecy: of profound humiliation and of great raising. Thus, the Apostle Paul in the Letter to Philippians manifests the unity of the old prophecies:** “**Who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross. Because of this, God greatly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Phil 2, 6-11) Wondrous unity of the prophecy. As humiliation is fulfilled, so the raising is fulfilled. The greater is sufferance and the higher is the glory.**

**Let us read the text of Lk 9,22-25**

**He said, "The Son of Man must suffer greatly and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed and on the third day be raised." Then he said to all, "If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. What profit is there for one to gain the whole world yet lose or forfeit himself?**

**Who is the disciple of Jesus, then? The one who is called to fulfil the mystery of his teacher in his flesh. In him, the sufferance of Christ must be fulfilled so that he may reach the glory of the blessed resurrection. Having the Christian turned away from Christ today and no longer having Jesus the Lord as unique and only reference point, he also missed the purpose of his being Christian: fulfilling the life of Christ Jesus in his flesh. Having a God without Christ and without the Holy Spirit, as reference point, a God without the prophetic Scripture, we have a Christian without his truth. Not only. We have a Christian who, day by day, plunges into falsity and denies every light in the name of darkness. From the supernatural with Christ, in Christ, for Christ he has moved into the natural without Christ. However, he ignores that the natural without Christ is a natural of death and no longer of life. A natural of sin and not of grace. A natural of darkness and not of light. A natural without the true God is also without the true man. And, thus, the love one preaches for man today is preached by the falsity of man and not by light, by truth, as it is not preached by the Word of the Lord. It could not be in other way. Christ and He alone is our light. Having refused Him, with Him we also refuse since He is the light of the world and we can become light only in Him, with Him, for Him. Refusing Him, only darkness remain for us. May the Mother of God intercede. May She deliver us from this universal falsity and lie.**