**TUESDAY MARCH 29 – FOURTH WEEK OF LENT [C]**

**Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your mat, and walk." Immediately the man became well, took up his mat, and walked. Now that day was a sabbath.**

**Jesus knows that it is sabbath. He also knows that the Jews are spying Him to find every little pretext to accuse Him of violation against the Law of Moses, so as to get rid of Him by accusing Him of serious violation to the Commandment. Why does He perform the miracle on a sabbath day then and moreover say to the man healed from his infirmity to take up his mat and to go home? The answer is in the mission the Father has entrusted Him. Jesus is sent by the Father to cut with a clean cut what the will of God is and what the thought of man is, what the Law commands and what the Law has never commanded. What the Letter to the Hebrew say about the Word of God must be said about the Word of Jesus too:** “**Indeed, the word of God is living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating even between soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and able to discern reflections and thoughts of the heart. No creature is concealed from him, but everything is naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must render an account.” (Hb 4, 12-13) However, Jesus does not let himself be moved neither by his heart nor by his compassion; heart and compassion are moved by the Holy Spirit, who then will also govern the Word of Jesus, so that he may highlight the truth of the Father and his truth, in order that no immediate evil comes to him. Then when his time comes, he will hand himself over to the hands of those who want to hand him over to Pilates and Pilates to death. For Jesus, too, it is valid what He says to his disciples:** **"Behold, I am sending you like sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and simple as doves. But beware of people, for they will hand you over to courts and scourge you in their synagogues, and you will be led before governors and kings for my sake as a witness before them and the pagans. When they hand you over, do not worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say. You will be given at that moment what you are to say. For it will not be you who speak but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.” (Mt 10, 16-20) Performing the miracle of the sabbath, Jesus puts the necessary condition so that He fulfils his mission as true Teacher. Let us read in the Gospel according to Matthew:** “**Moving on from there, he went into their synagogue. And behold, there was a man there who had a withered hand. They questioned him, "Is it lawful to cure on the sabbath?” so that they might accuse him. He said to them, "Which one of you who has a sheep that falls into a pit on the sabbath will not take hold of it and lift it out? How much more valuable a person is than a sheep. So it is lawful to do good on the sabbath." Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and it was restored as sound as the other. But the Pharisees went out and took counsel against him to put him to death.” (Mt 12, 9-14) In the Holy Spirit, Jesus knows the reaction of those who live in the darkness and wish to remain in it. He does not challenge darkness. He wishes to illuminate it with the powerful light of his Word, always governed by the highest wisdom and intelligence of the Holy Spirit.**

**Let us read the text of Jn 5, 1-16**

**After this, there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem at the Sheep (Gate) a pool called in Hebrew Bethesda, with five porticoes. In these lay a large number of ill, blind, lame, and crippled. One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been ill for a long time, he said to him, "Do you want to be well?" The sick man answered him, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; while I am on my way, someone else gets down there before me." Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your mat, and walk." Immediately the man became well, took up his mat, and walked. Now that day was a sabbath. So the Jews said to the man who was cured, "It is the sabbath, and it is not lawful for you to carry your mat." He answered them, "The man who made me well told me, 'Take up your mat and walk.'" They asked him, "Who is the man who told you, 'Take it up and walk'?" The man who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had slipped away, since there was a crowd there. After this Jesus found him in the temple area and said to him, "Look, you are well; do not sin any more, so that nothing worse may happen to you." The man went and told the Jews that Jesus was the one who had made him well. Therefore, the Jews began to persecute Jesus because he did this on a sabbath.**

**What happens in the pool of Bethesda reveals us a great truth, not two. The first truth tells us that no man has given a hand so that the ill could get down into water and receive the healing. The second truth reveals that this man can nothing by himself. He cannot get down alone. He is crippled. Everyone lives his particular, personal selfishness. Jesus needs one only word to give full health to the infirm: "Rise, take up your mat, and walk." This must convince our heart that the Word of Jesus is not a word of man, it is true Word of God. It is a Word filled with the saving omnipotence. Jesus is truly from God for God alone has the almighty, creative, saving, redeeming, performing miracles and mighty deeds. Jesus truly comes from the Father, as He says later. Here is then the purpose of the miracle: attesting that He is true Teacher who comes from God. If He comes from God, his Word is true. Mother of God, help us believe with true faith.**