**FRIDAY JULY 15 – XV WEEK O. T. [C]**

**If you knew what this meant, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned these innocent men. For the Son of Man is Lord of the sabbath.**

**The Pharisees accuse the disciples of Jesus to violate the Law of the Sabbath. They cannot enter a field of grain because of hunger on a Sabbath day, pick the heads, rub them with their hands and then nourish with the grains obtained. If the disciples violate the Law of the Sabbath and Jesus does not correct, preventing it to happen, He is certainly a bad Teacher. The true Teachers know how to be vigilant over their disciples so that no Law is violated.**

**Jesus replies that before hunger there are no Laws. David and his companions’ hunger attest it: “David went to Ahimelech, the priest of Nob, who came trembling to meet him and asked, "Why are you alone? Is there no one with you?" David answered the priest: "The king gave me a commission and told me to let no one know anything about the business on which he sent me or the commission he gave me. For that reason I have arranged a meeting place with my men. Now what have you on hand? Give me five loaves, or whatever you can find." But the priest replied to David, "I have no ordinary bread on hand, only holy bread; if the men have abstained from women, you may eat some of that." David answered the priest: "We have indeed been segregated from women as on previous occasions. Whenever I go on a journey, all the young men are consecrated - even for a secular journey. All the more so today, when they are consecrated at arms!" So the priest gave him holy bread, for no other bread was on hand except the showbread which had been removed from the LORD'S presence and replaced by fresh bread when it was taken away. One of Saul's servants was there that day, detained before the LORD; his name was Doeg the Edomite, and he was Saul's chief henchman. David then asked Ahimelech: "Do you have a spear or a sword on hand? I brought along neither my sword nor my weapons, because the king's business was urgent." The priest replied: "The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you killed in the Vale of the Terebinth, is here (wrapped in a mantle) behind an ephod. If you wish to take that, take it; there is no sword here except that one." David said: "There is none to match it. Give it to me!" (1Sam 21,2-10).**

**After having announced this most pure truth – hunger knows no Law because God has given no Law – He says to the Pharisees that they are the transgressors of the Law. Which Law is it? The Law of compassion, of mercy, of piety toward those who are in the sufferance either of the body or of the Spirit. This Law of compassion is thus taught by the prophet Hosea: "Come, let us return to the LORD, For it is he who has rent, but he will heal us; he has struck us, but he will bind our wounds. He will revive us after two days; on the third day he will raise us up, to live in his presence. Let us know, let us strive to know the LORD; as certain as the dawn is his coming, and his judgment shines forth like the light of day! He will come to us like the rain, like spring rain that waters the earth." What can I do with you, Ephraim? What can I do with you, Judah? Your piety is like a morning cloud, like the dew that early passes away. For this reason I smote them through the prophets, I slew them by the words of my mouth; For it is love that I desire, not sacrifice, and knowledge of God rather than holocausts.” (Os 6,1-6).**

**Let us read the text of Mt 12,1-8**

**At that time Jesus was going through a field of grain on the sabbath. His disciples were hungry and began to pick the heads of grain and eat them. When the Pharisees saw this, they said to him, "See, your disciples are doing what is unlawful to do on the sabbath." He said to them, "Have you not read what David did when he and his companions were hungry, how he went into the house of God and ate the bread of offering, which neither he nor his companions but only the priests could lawfully eat? Or have you not read in the law that on the sabbath the priests serving in the temple violate the sabbath and are innocent? I say to you, something greater than the temple is here. If you knew what this meant, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned these innocent men. For the Son of Man is Lord of the sabbath."**

**But there is a third reply that Jesus gives to these Pharisees: “The Son of Man is Lord of the sabbath.” What does this most high revelation mean? It means that He is the Law of the Sabbath and its perfect interpretion. Not only of the Sabbath is Jesus the Law and its perfect interpretation, but of the entire Law and of all the prophets. This truth had already been proclaimed in the Sermon of the Mountain: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. Amen, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter will pass from the law, until all things have taken place. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever obeys and teaches these commandments will be called greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” (Mt 5,17-19). Today only Christ Jesus gives the perfect knowledge of God and of his Law. He is the Lord of the Law. This truth is worthy for us, too, who, like modern Pharisees, have placed ourselves above the Law and the prophets, above the Gospel and the Holy Spirit, the Father and the Son. Today Christ is whom is lacking in the Christians. Christ the Lord of the Law is lacking. This is why everyone is making law to himself.**