**MONDAY AUGUST 08 – XIX WEEK O.T. [C]**

**“But that we may not offend them, go to the sea, drop in a hook, and take the first fish that comes up. Open its mouth and you will find a coin worth twice the temple tax. Give that to them for me and for you."**

**The offence is a sinful, unfair action or word, not conformed to the Law of the Lord, or not respectful of the virtues, both theological and cardinal, uttered or fulfilled before other people. Jesus says that blessed is the one who takes no offence at him: “When John heard in prison of the works of the Messiah, he sent his disciples to him with this question, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?" Jesus said to them in reply, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind regain their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the good news proclaimed to them. And blessed is the one who takes no offense at me." (Mt 11,2-6) This person is blessed for he has pure heart and mind. He is a person capable of great discernment. Jesus has never told or done anything that was not most pure motion of the Holy Spirit. He knows what might cause offence and avoids it carefully. Jesus walks in the Will of his Father, always. He is always moved by the Holy Spirit. He always observes the entire Law. He has done and said only the good, always. He has never said an inappropriate or misplaced word. In every response He was enlightened and guided by the supernatural, divine, eternal wisdom in which He grew day after day. But why does one take offence at Him then? Because men have another law, another word, another code of behaviour. Jesus walks with the code of the Father. The Jews with the code of men. Jesus walks with the code of Heaven.**

**During a long argument with the Jews, Jesus has solemnly affirmed that no one among them might ever prove that He has sinned: “Because he spoke this way, many came to believe in him. Jesus then said to those Jews who believed in him, "If you remain in my word, you will truly be my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." They answered him, "We are descendants of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How can you say, 'You will become free'?" Jesus answered them, "Amen, amen, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin. A slave does not remain in a household forever, but a son always remains. So if a son frees you, then you will truly be free. I know that you are descendants of Abraham. But you are trying to kill me, because my word has no room among you. I tell you what I have seen in the Father's presence; then do what you have heard from the Father." They answered and said to him, "Our father is Abraham." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing the works of Abraham. But now you are trying to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God; Abraham did not do this. You are doing the works of your father!" (So) they said to him, "We are not illegitimate. We have one Father, God." Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and am here; I did not come on my own, but he sent me. Why do you not understand what I am saying? Because you cannot bear to hear my word. You belong to your father the devil and you willingly carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in truth, because there is no truth in him. When he tells a lie, he speaks in character, because he is a liar and the father of lies. But because I speak the truth, you do not believe me. Can any of you charge me with sin? If I am telling the truth, why do you not believe me? Whoever belongs to God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not listen, because you do not belong to God." (Jn 8,30-47).**

**Let us read the text of Mt 17,22-27**

**As they were gathering in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is to be handed over to men, and they will kill him, and he will be raised on the third day." And they were overwhelmed with grief. When they came to Capernaum, the collectors of the temple tax approached Peter and said, "Doesn't your teacher pay the temple tax?" "Yes," he said. When he came into the house, before he had time to speak, Jesus asked him, "What is your opinion, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth take tolls or census tax? From their subjects or from foreigners?" When he said, "From foreigners," Jesus said to him, "Then the subjects are exempt. But that we may not offend them, go to the sea, drop in a hook, and take the first fish that comes up. Open its mouth and you will find a coin worth twice the temple tax. Give that to them for me and for you."**

**Neither did Pilate succeed in proving that Jesus had sinned. The chief priest has accused him of blasphemy, but without proving the falsity of Jesus. Instead, Jesus had only affirmed his highest truth. History might never prove that Jesus has sinned. Not only history, but eternity either. No man who will come on earth might prove that Jesus has committed something evil. He has been the highest righteous, the highest saint, the true and perfect highest. When can one accuse Jesus of sin or of offence? When we use the code of men, that is a code of wickedness, falsity, evil, foolishness, ignorance. With this code every word of Jesus is declared false and every action not conformed to the law, but it is about the law of men and of their traditions. Never of the Law of God and of his divine will. May the Mother of God and our Mother help us so that every offence may be always avoided by us.**