**TUESDAY DECEMBER 06 – SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT [A]**

**In just the same way, it is not the will of your heavenly Father that one of these little ones be lost.**

**Jesus lives in a religious way made of scribes and of Pharisees, whose religion is not that of the God of Abraham, God of Isaac and God of Jacob, God of Moses and of the Prophets. Instead, it was a religion tailored on their thoughts. To know something of their religion, it is enough to read some Word turned to them by Jesus the Lord: The Lord said to him, "Oh you Pharisees! Although you cleanse the outside of the cup and the dish, inside you are filled with plunder and evil. You fools! Did not the maker of the outside also make the inside? But as to what is within, give alms, and behold, everything will be clean for you. Woe to you Pharisees! You pay tithes of mint and of rue and of every garden herb, but you pay no attention to judgment and to love for God. These you should have done, without overlooking the others. Woe to you Pharisees! You love the seat of honor in synagogues and greetings in marketplaces. Woe to you! You are like unseen graves over which people unknowingly walk."**

**Then one of the scholars of the law said to him in reply, "Teacher, by saying this you are insulting us too." And he said, "Woe also to you scholars of the law! You impose on people burdens hard to carry, but you yourselves do not lift one finger to touch them. Woe to you! You build the memorials of the prophets whom your ancestors killed. Consequently, you bear witness and give consent to the deeds of your ancestors, for they killed them and you do the building. Therefore, the wisdom of God said, 'I will send to them prophets and apostles; some of them they will kill and persecute' in order that this generation might be charged with the blood of all the prophets shed since the foundation of the world, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah who died between the altar and the temple building. Yes, I tell you, this generation will be charged with their blood! Woe to you, scholars of the law! You have taken away the key of knowledge. You yourselves did not enter and you stopped those trying to enter." (Lk 11,39-52).**

**In their religion, there is no place for all those they declared sinners. But who were the sinners? All those who were neither scribes nor Pharisees. They alone were saints. All the others were sinners. All the others were excluded by salvation. The religion of God, of the true God, is very different. God does not want the death of the sinner. He wants him to convert and live. God does not abandon the sinner to his sin. He sends thoughtfully and with no interruption to call every man to return into his covenant. The prophets are these powerful and universal grace of God sent by Him to seek who is lost and lead him back to the holy sheepfold of the Word. Jesus comes to seek the sinners and the scribes and the Pharisees murmur against Him. They do not like that He seeks the sinners for their conversion. There must not be any conversion for them. Is there a more perverse thought than that? Is there a greater disdain than that against the will of their God and Lord? A good shepherd always takes care of his sheep and always seeks the sheep that are lost. If he lets his sheep be lost, he will remain without sheepfold in the end. This was what happened with the scribes and the Pharisees. Each of them was a sheepfold to himself. They were all shepherds not only without sheepfold, but also against the sheep. The will of God is very different. He is the Shepherd that always seeks his sheep.**

**Let us read the text of Mt 18,12-14**

**What is your opinion? If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them goes astray, will he not leave the ninety-nine in the hills and go in search of the stray? And if he finds it, amen, I say to you, he rejoices more over it than over the ninety-nine that did not stray. In just the same way, it is not the will of your heavenly Father that one of these little ones be lost.**

**Here is what Jesus says of himself, the Good Shepherd sent by the Father: “So Jesus said again, "Amen, amen, I say to you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came [before me] are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. A thief comes only to steal and slaughter and destroy; I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd. A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. A hired man, who is not a shepherd and whose sheep are not his own, sees a wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away, and the wolf catches and scatters them. This is because he works for pay and has no concern for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and I know mine and mine know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I will lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. These also I must lead, and they will hear my voice, and there will be one flock, one shepherd. This is why the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own. I have power to lay it down, and power to take it up again. This command I have received from my Father." (Jn 10,7-18). Whoever wants to live the true religion in every thought and in every deed must be from the will of God, revealed will, not imagined, written will, not thought. God has entrusted his will on the stone so that no one may transform it. What is written on the stone is his will. What is not written on the stone can never be said his will. It is written will on the stone that no one goes astray. It is written will on the stone that God wants one to seek what have departed. Mother of God, help us stay at what is written on the stone.**