**They preach but they do not practice**

**TUESDAY MARCH 2 (Mt 23, 1-12)**

Jesus is most perfect in the Word and in the obedience to it. He only says and does what the Father commands him, when and how He commands it. We can imitate him: *"Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light." (Mt 11,28-30). "So when he had washed their feet (and) put his garments back on and reclined at table again, he said to them, "Do you realize what I have done for you? You call me 'teacher' and 'master,' and rightly so, for indeed I am. If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet. I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do. Amen, amen, I say to you, no slave is greater than his master nor any messenger greater than the one who sent him. If you understand this, blessed are you if you do it." (Jn 13, 12-17).* St. Paul invites the Philippians to have the same feelings as they were in Christ Jesus: “*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 5,6-11*).* Jesus is a perennial and unsurpassable model. No one will ever be able to match his obedience.

Even the Letter to the Hebrews invites to look up to Christ Jesus Crucified: "*Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us rid ourselves of every burden and sin That clings to us and persevere in running the race That lies before us while keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus, the leader and perfecter of faith. For the sake of the joy that lay before him he endured the cross, despising its shame, and has taken his seat at the right of the throne of God. Consider how he endured such opposition from sinners, in order that you may not grow weary and lose heart. In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood. "(Heb 12, 1-4).*Paul does not look up Christ, in his body he carries the stigmata of Christ. For this he can say: *“join with others in being imitators of me, brothers, and observe those who thus conduct themselves according to the model you have in us. For many, as I have often told you and now tell you even in tears, conduct themselves as enemies of the cross of Christ. "*(Phil 3, 17-28*).*Jesus warns against imitating scribes and Pharisees. They don’t do what they say. To imitate them is to follow paths of great evil, infinite evil.

*Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to his disciples, saying, "The scribes and the Pharisees have taken their seat on the chair of Moses. Therefore, do and observe all things whatsoever they tell you, but do not follow their example. For they preach but they do not practice. They tie up heavy burdens (hard to carry) and lay them on people's shoulders, but they will not lift a finger to move them. All their works are performed to be seen. They widen their phylacteries and lengthen their tassels. They love places of honor at banquets, seats of honor in synagogues, greetings in marketplaces, and the salutation 'Rabbi.' As for you, do not be called 'Rabbi.' You have but one teacher, and you are all brothers. Call no one on earth your father; you have but one Father in heaven. Do not be called 'Master'; you have but one master, the Messiah. The greatest among you must be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled; but whoever humbles himself will be exalted.*

Every disciple of Jesus is obliged to be imitable in everything. If he is not imitable, he is not a true disciple. The more it grows the possibility to imitate him, the more the truth of his being a Christian becomes manifest. To think of leading someone to true faith in the gospel by a bad example is great foolishness. The Gospel is proclaimed and always shown to be lived.

Mother of the Redemption, Angels, Saints, make us true imitators of the Lord Jesus.