**MONDAY JULY 12 – XV WEEK O.T. [B]**

**"Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever does not take up his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me.**

**To shed full light of truth and justice upon these words of Jesus the Lord we shall make use of an event taken from the Old Testament. It will enlighten our mind and, thus, we might enter the most holy truth. Here is what happened. Eli is a priest of the Lord.** “**Now the sons of Eli were wicked; they had respect neither for the LORD nor for the priests' duties toward the people. When someone offered a sacrifice, the priest's servant would come with a three-pronged fork, while the meat was still boiling, and would thrust it into the basin, kettle, caldron, or pot. Whatever the fork brought up, the priest would keep. That is how all the Israelites were treated who came to the sanctuary at Shiloh. In fact, even before the fat was burned, the priest's servant would come and say to the man offering the sacrifice, "Give me some meat to roast for the priest. He will not accept boiled meat from you, only raw meat." And if the man protested to him, "Let the fat be burned first as is the custom, then take whatever you wish," he would reply, "No, give it to me now, or else I will take it by force." Thus the young men sinned grievously in the presence of the LORD; they treated the offerings to the LORD with disdain. (1Sam 2,12-17). We assist to heavy sins from the children of Eli: the offense one gave to the people with an acting of arrogance and overbearingness, the despise of the Lord, the profanation of the holy things. The honour of the Lord and his glory have been trampled. Their acting was of great disturbance for the faith of all the people coming from Shiloh to honour and celebrate the Lord.**

**What is it reproached to the father Eli? His having been bland in reprimanding his children. He should have asserted his authority and not let the Lord be despised.** “**A man of God came to Eli and said to him: "This is what the LORD says: 'I went so far as to reveal myself to your father's family when they were in Egypt as slaves to the house of Pharaoh. I chose them out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priests, to go up to my altar, to burn incense, and to wear the ephod before me; and I assigned all the oblations of the Israelites to your father's family. Why do you keep a greedy eye on my sacrifices and on the offerings which I have prescribed? And why do you honor your sons in preference to me, fattening yourselves with the choicest part of every offering of my people Israel?' This, therefore, is the oracle of the LORD, the God of Israel: 'I said in the past that your family and your father's family should minister in my presence forever. But now,' the LORD declares, 'away with this! for I will honor those who honor me, but those who spurn me shall be accursed. Yes, the time is coming when I will break your strength and the strength of your father's family, so that no man in your family shall reach old age. You shall witness as a disappointed rival all the benefits enjoyed by Israel, but there shall never be an old man in your family. I will permit some of your family to remain at my altar, to wear out their eyes in consuming greed; but the rest of the men of your family shall die by the sword. You shall have a sign in what will happen to your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas: both shall die on the same day. I will choose a faithful priest who shall do what I have in heart and mind. I will establish a lasting house for him which shall function in the presence of my anointed forever. Then whoever is left of your family will come to grovel before him for a piece of silver or a loaf of bread, and will say: Appoint me, I beg you, to a priestly function, that I may have a morsel of bread to eat.'"(1Sam 2,27-36). Eli saw and let it happen. The words he said to his children were ineffective. They perseverate in their sins also because of the weakness of their father.**

**Here is what the Lord, eternal guardian of his glory and his honour, reveals to Samuel:** **The LORD said to Samuel: "I am about to do something in Israel that will cause the ears of everyone who hears it to ring. On that day I will carry out in full against Eli everything I threatened against his family. I announce to him that I am condemning his family once and for all, because of this crime: though he knew his sons were blaspheming God, he did not reprove them. Therefore, I swear to the family of Eli that no sacrifice or offering will ever expiate its crime." Samuel then slept until morning, when he got up early and opened the doors of the temple of the LORD. He feared to tell Eli the vision, but Eli called to him, "Samuel, my son!" He replied, "Here I am." Then Eli asked, "What did he say to you? Hide nothing from me! May God do thus and so to you if you hide a single thing he told you." So Samuel told him everything, and held nothing back. Eli answered, "He is the LORD. He will do what he judges best." (1Sam 3, 11-18)**

**Who is in charge of guarding the glory and the honour of the Lord and does not intervene with firmness of Holy Spirit to impede the disdain and the dishonour perpetrated against the Lord, together with the offense inflicting so many damages to faith, not only of the childlike and the weak, but also of the strong and of those who are already forward in the truth and in the light, this one is responsible of all the evils his missed vigilance or bland intervention produces. Firmness, fortitude, a clear and unequivocal word, a resolver intervention are necessary. Eli should have removed his children from the tent of the meeting. He should have impeded them to enter. He did not. He loved his children more than the glory of his Lord. God, our God, the eternal guardian of his glory and of his honour intervenes. What Eli did not do, he will. However, his interventions are very painful. Eli loses his children and his life, too. His family also loses the priesthood. They have not honoured the Lord. The Lord deprives him of his glory and his honour. We are in the Old Testament and the corrections reflect the historical moment.**

**Let us read from the text of Mt 10,34-11,1**

**"Do not think that I have come to bring peace upon the earth. I have come to bring not peace but the sword. For I have come to set a man 'against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and one's enemies will be those of his household.' "Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever does not take up his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. "Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me. Whoever receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and whoever receives a righteous man because he is righteous will receive a righteous man's reward. And whoever gives only a cup of cold water to one of these little ones to drink because he is a disciple - amen, I say to you, he will surely not lose his reward."** **When Jesus finished giving these commands to his twelve disciples, he went away from that place to teach and to preach in their towns.**

**Today the modalities of intervention of the Lord in custody and defence of his honour and of his glory are no longer those of yesterday. We are in the New Testament. Today Jesus does not speak as he spoke to Samuel yesterday. Today he says an eternal word: Christ Jesus wants to be loved above all person and above all things. If one loves people and things with a superior love than that toward his person, he is not worthy of Him for the eternity. It means non-eternal dignity. It means exclusion from his eternal kingdom. A man can even love the father and the mother more than Christ the Lord. A mother or a father can even love the sons and the daughters more than Christ the Lord. We know, however, that one is not worthy of Him and the non-dignity excludes from the participation of his eternal glory. Let us read in the Revelation: "Now have salvation and power come, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Anointed. For the accuser of our brothers is cast out, who accuses them before our God day and night. They conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; love for life did not deter them from death. Therefore, rejoice, you heavens, and you who dwell in them. But woe to you, earth and sea, for the Devil has come down to you in great fury, for he knows he has but a short time." (Rev 10, 10-12) Holy Mother, help us. We want to honour your Son according to truth and justice. Amen.**