**MONDAY JULY 19 – XVI WEEK O.T. [B]**

**"An evil and unfaithful generation seeks a sign, but no sign will be given it except the sign of Jonah the prophet. Just as Jonah was in the belly of the whale three days and three nights, so will the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights.**

**The sign the Pharisees and the scribes demand is such a high, great, impressive, majestic work that serves as unquestionable and undisputable proof of his truth as Messiah of the Lord. All the people affirmed that Jesus is the Son of David, the Messiah of God. They demand Jesus to attest his truth by a striking and irrefutable work. Jesus does not have to give proof of what He is. He just has to live his truth in a perfect obedience to the will of the Father who sent him. Living of most pure obedience, it is up to the others to ascertain his truth from everything he does and operates. The proof of his truth is his life. In the same way, the proof of the truth of the Christian is the light he radiates from his daily living. If the entire life is not a proof for them, if, by the entire life, they are not able to reveal the truth of Christ Jesus, then it is sign that the heart is hardened. If the entire life is useless, no other proof might be necessary. Whoever is blind is always blind. He is blind before ordinariness and extraordinariness. Whoever does not see the ordinary might never see the extraordinary, or the wondrous. Even if he sees it, his vision remains imprinted in his mind for one only instant, then evil regains his power over will and heart. The everyday life, the ordinary is the way for the knowledge of the truth of a person. The extraordinary is useless. The extraordinary lasts one only instant.**

**Those who demand Jesus the sign are said to be evil and unfaithful by Him. They are evil since they turn truth into falsity and falsity into truth. They are unfaithful since they betrayed the Lord. They abandoned the true God and handed over the idolatry, they handed over falsity and lie. To these hearts hardened in evil, in lie, in falsity, in idolatry, in neglecting the truth of God, what good does it do if Jesus gives a sign? Nothing. One must not demand a sign. One must grasp the sign when Jesus gives it. The sign of Jesus is his entire life. Other signs are useless. Another reason why Jesus does not give the sign is this one: theirs is a challenge of ability, of power over Christ Jesus. God does not let himself be challenged by anyone. One does not reach God through a challenge. One reaches Him through humility and simplicity of the heart. God does not deal with the proud. God lets himself be bent by the humble. The proud might never access the heart of God. The humbles are always welcomed by the heart of the Father. However, Jesus gives them a sign. He gives them a unique sign, ever seen before and that will never be seen in the future. He gives them the sign of his glorious resurrection. He gives them in a mysterious, hidden way. One may understand it only in the great humility.**

**The Scripture says that Jonah stayed in the belly of the whale three days and three nights. Jesus, on par with Jonah, will stay in the womb of the earth three days and three nights. Then, on par with Jonah, He will be thrown out. On the third day after his death Jesus will rise. Thus, the resurrection becomes the sign of the signs that is given to every unfaithful and evil generation so that it converts and lives, after having believed in the truth of Jesus the Lord. The sign is given. To every man the responsibility of reading and interpreting it in fullness of truth. The sign is perennial and it is for all the generations.**

**Jonah is a man the Lord sent to Niniveh to call it to conversion and to repentance. Niniveh repented, converted, returned to the Lord at the preaching of Jonah. After the conversion, the Lord did not carry out his purpose of destroying it. Jonah is a man, pure man, simple man, even if sent by God, and his prophet. However, before this man just saying few words, without fulfilling any particular sign, the entire Niniveh converted. Jesus is the Only Begotten Son of the Father, his Beloved Son, the eternal Word who made himself flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary, he is God himself who, in the flesh, comes to preach the conversion and the faith in the Gospel. Not only does he preach the conversion and the faith in the Gospel, he fulfils every kind of sign. However, the heart of this generation remained in his perversion and his unfaithfulness. They did not convert to the Lord.**

**What will Niniveh do at the Judgement? It will arise and condemn this generation. It will cry out its incredulity and persistence in evil against it. It will have to cry out, since they converted by one only phrase of Jonah. Jesus is not greater than Jonah as a prophet. He is greater as a Person. He is God. He is the incarnated God, the God who made himself man. He is true God and true man. He is infinitively greater even in the deeds. Jonah did not do any work. He did not give any sign. He simply cried out the purpose of the Lord upon the town. He did not do anything else and, moreover, for a very short time. Instead, Jesus gave a multiplicity of signs. He attested that nothing is impossible to Him. He healed any kind of sickness and infirmities. He revealed his omnipotence and his mercy to them. Despite this, this generation remained deaf, blind, silent. They remained evil and unfaithful. They did not convert. Their sin is great. For this reason, Niniveh will arise and will condemn it on the last day. For every gift the Lord provides, at the judgement will He arise and cry out against us. For every gift, will we be judged on the last day.**

**Let us read the text of Mt 12,38-42**

**Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to him, "Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you." He said to them in reply, "An evil and unfaithful generation seeks a sign, but no sign will be given it except the sign of Jonah the prophet. Just as Jonah was in the belly of the whale three days and three nights, so will the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights. At the judgment, the men of Nineveh will arise with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and there is something greater than Jonah here. At the judgment the queen of the south will arise with this generation and condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and there is something greater than Solomon here.**

**There is also another example Jesus adduces to manifest the guilty insensibility of this evil and unfaithful generation: that of the queen of the south. The tale of the First Book of Kings is enlightening in order to understand the thought of Jesus the Lord. This queen remains with no words before the wisdom of Salomon. Now we know that that of Salomon is a participated wisdom, it is a gift the Lord has given to him. A woman comes from far away, from very far away to listen to this man while speaking and explaining things. Listening to him while speaking, the heart inebriates itself of his science. Jesus is the eternal Wisdom, the uncreated Wisdom, divine Wisdom. He knows God, since his dwelling is the womb of the Father. He knows man, since, of every man, He is his eternal truth. Despite this, before such greatness, that is together divine and human, this generation remains deaf and blind. It uses the mouth only to sin against the Holy Spirit. Against it, at the judgement, the queen of the south, too, will arise and cry out against their sin.**

**She came from very far away to listen to a man, a mortal one, even if wise, very wise. They refused to listen to the author himself of the Wisdom, the Wisdom come among them into human flesh. The greater the gift is, the greater the responsibility at the judgement is. God spoke to them through his Only Begotten Son and, through Him, he fulfilled all the wonders of his love. No one has never done so much for a generation. No one might never do it. Christ Jesus and He alone did it, He who is greater than Jonah and greater than Salomon. Now that this generation knows that, if it wants, it can be saved, it can convert and return repentant to his Lord and God. Unfortunately, we know that this generation refused his Saviour and Redeemer. Mother of the Wisdom that made flesh into you, obtain for us the gift of a most pure faith.**