**MONDAY AUGUST 16 – XX WEEK O.T. [B]**

**"If you wish to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to (the) poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." When the young man heard this statement, he went away sad, for he had many possessions.**

**One gains the eternal life walking through the narrow road of the Word the Lord. The Gospel is this truth. The entire Old Testament is this truth. The entire New Testament is this truth. The Word of the Lord and the Word of Christ Jesus are this truth. It urges, however, to put into heart that the Word of God is not contained in one only verse of the Scripture, but in all verses. It is not in one only commandment, but in all commandments. It is not in one only truth but in all truths. It is not in one only Word but in all Words. To this all one must add that the understanding of the Word is gift of the Holy Spirit, which gives it directly, through its inspiration and motion, but also indirectly, by means of the Apostles, who are the ministers of the Word and the Administrators of the Mysteries of God. Neither the Apostles without the Holy Spirit, nor the Holy Spirit without the Apostles. But neither the Apostles and the Holy Spirit without the Church, that is the body of Christ. Those who separate the Spirit from the Apostles, the Apostles from the Spirit, the Spirit and the Apostles from the Church and the Church from the Apostles and the Holy Spirit are therefore in a great mistake. Communion and unity are proper to the Spirit. Church, Apostles, Holy Spirit, Body of Christ must remain one only thing in eternity. Separation, division, opposition generate and cause death of the truth in the heart of faithful.**

**But observing the Commandments is not enough to be in the will of the Father. The Father might manifest his particular will to each man. Since every man was created by Christ in view of Christ and redeemed by Christ in view of Christ, the Father might ask, in the Holy Spirit, that one dedicates himself to a special vocation to fulfil a particular mission. Faith precisely consists of this: taking life away from one’s own hands and one’s own will and hand it over the hands and the will of the Father. The handover, however, does not occur once forever, on the contrary it must occur moment after moment, since the mission must be lived or carried out according to the will of the Father, never according to the will of man. Instead it happens that one gives God the will in the initial act, but then one proceeds by his own will, by his own feelings, by his own heart, in every moment in which one lives the mission. Thus acting one is not of God according to will and justice. By the baptism, one is son of God, by the confirmation one is witness of Christ Jesus, by the sacrament of ordination one is minister of Christ, by the marriage one is one only flesh, by the Eucharist we live and grow as unique and only body of the Lord. But then in life we do not live as children of God, we do not behave as witnesses of Christ Jesus and not even the new life received by the other sacraments is lived by the will of the Father by motion of the Holy Spirit. We are children of God by sacrament, we are not children of God by will, heart, mind, desires. We receive a new nature, but we do not live it according to the new nature acquired, as we are not by the will of God, by the motion of the Holy Spirit, by the grace of Christ Jesus.**

**Let us read the text of Mt 19,16-22**

**Now someone approached him and said, "Teacher, what good must I do to gain eternal life?" He answered him, "Why do you ask me about the good? There is only One who is good. If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments." He asked him, "Which ones?" And Jesus replied, " 'You shall not kill; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; honor your father and your mother'; and 'you shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"The young man said to him, "All of these I have observed. What do I still lack?"Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to (the) poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." When the young man heard this statement, he went away sad, for he had many possessions.**

**Someone approaches Jesus. He asks what he has to do to gain the eternal life. If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments. 'You shall not kill; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; honor your father and your mother'; and 'you shall love your neighbor as yourself. It would be enough and nothing would lack if the Lord had not manifested one of his particular will, a request of handover to Him of the entire life. And this is exactly what the Lord wants from this man. What lacks? Here is the answer of Jesus: "If you wish to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to (the) poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." In these words, the Father manifests this man his will. He was created to follow Christ Jesus, to be a missionary in the world of his Gospel, an Apostle of his light, grace, truth. Vocation gives the true fulfilment to one’s own nature. If the Lord created us for a purpose, our nature is fulfilled in the realization of that purpose. Giving it another purpose is leading it out of its truth of creation, of origin. This man loves his possessions more than his truth of nature, created to be free from the possessions of this world, wanted by his Lord to be handed over the mission of the announcement of Gospel. Vocation is the truth of one’s own being and acting. Not accepting the vocation is putting oneself out of one’s own truth. One gives one’s own nature another purpose for which we were not created. In doing so, the risk of eternal perdition is always before our eyes, under our feet. This man denies his nature and suddenly enters the sadness. His many possessions might never supply or fill the emptiness of nature chosen by him with the refusal to accept the divine will. Created for a purpose, he finds himself to live another one, false, a purpose that is not for his life.**

**Here is a further necessary reflection. Every Word of the Lord is similar to a flower with many petals. As the flower is the fruit of the many petals, so also the truth of the Word is the fruit of the many details that are contained in the truth. This means that every narration of the Gospel can be read and understood many times and in different ways, without never betraying its truth, but underlining an aspect or another one, now a detail and now another one, now describing the colouring of a petal and now the colouring of another one. The episode of this man approaching Jesus with a specific question can be read and understood different times, but no way and no time can deplete all the richness of truth and of revelation contained in it. Let us try, for instance, to read it asking, we too, a question to Jesus: “Teacher, how is it possible that a man who observes the Commandments since the birth, being rich, will hardly enter the reign of heaven? Are the commandments not the way to enter the reign of heaven?”**

**Man can have every good intention in observing the Commandments, provided that he is free from mammon. If it conquers his heart, it is the end. Because of mammon, many people sell the conscience, the spirit, the soul, the body, the faith, the Gospel, Christ, God himself. Mammon is a most powerful force of seduction. This rich man already shows the signs of his attachment to richness. He is already seduced by it. Before the proposal of Christ to gain an eternal treasure in heavens, he prefers enjoying his possessions today. This is slavery under the powerful yoke of mammon. His heart is already prisoner of the things he owns. If he is already slave and prisoner today, might he hope to be free tomorrow? Mammon is more than an octopus. When it takes possession of a soul, it does not leave it, it devours it. We are all warned. Thus, Jesus warns his disciples: "No one can serve two masters. He will either hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.” (Mt 6, 24)** “**The seed sown among thorns is the one who hears the word, but then worldly anxiety and the lure of riches choke the word and it bears no fruit.”(Mt 13, 22) Thus the Apostle Paul, too: “Tell the rich in the present age not to be proud and not to rely on so uncertain a thing as wealth but rather on God, who richly provides us with all things for our enjoyment. Tell them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous, ready to share, thus accumulating as treasure a good foundation for the future, so as to win the life that is true life.” (1Tm 6,17-19). May the Mother of God make us free.**