**FEBRUARY 2020**

***FIRST DECADE OF FEBRUARY***

**Why are you terrified? Do you not yet have faith?**

 **SATURDAY 1 FEBRUARY (Mk 4,35-41)**

The Letter to the Hebrews reveals that: *"Faith is the foundation of what is hoped for and proof of what cannot be seen. For this faith our ancestors were approved by God. By faith, we know that the worlds were formed by the word of God, so that the visible world originated from the invisible. By faith, Abel offered God a better sacrifice than that of Cain and according to it he was declared just, having God attested to accept his gifts; for it, though dead, he still speaks. By faith, Enoch was taken away, so as not to see death; and he was not found anymore, because God had taken him away. In fact, before being taken elsewhere, he was declared a person pleasing to God. Without faith it is impossible to be acceptable to him; in fact, whoever comes close to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him”*. If faith is the foundation of what cannot be seen, what did the Apostles fail to do? What have they failed in?

We can give the answer, letting ourselves be helped by the Psalm: *“The* [*Lord*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03068) *is my* [*shepherd*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=07462)*, I shall not* [*want*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02637)*. He makes me* [*lie*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=07257)[*down*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=07257) *in* [*green*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=01877)[*pastures*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05116)*; He* [*leads*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05095) *me* [*beside*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05921)[*quiet*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=04496)[*waters*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=04325)*. He* [*restores*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=07725) *my* [*soul*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05315)*; He* [*guides*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05148) *me in the* [*paths*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=04570) *of* [*righteousness*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=06664) *For His* [*name's*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=08034)[*sake*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=04616)*.* [*Even*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=01571)[*though*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03588) *I* [*walk*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=01980) *through the* [*valley*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=01516) *of the* [*shadow*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=06757) *of* [*death*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=06757)*, I* [*fear*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03372)[*no*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03808)[*evil*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=07451)*, for You are with me; Your* [*rod*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=07626) *and Your* [*staff*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=04938)*, they* [*comfort*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05162) *me You* [*prepare*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=06186) *a* [*table*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=07979)[*before*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=06440) *me in the* [*presence*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05048) *of my* [*enemies*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=06887)*; You have* [*anointed*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=01878) *my* [*head*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=07218) *with* [*oil*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=08081)*; My* [*cup*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03563)[*overflows*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=07310)*.* [*Surely*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=0389)[*goodness*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02896) *and* [*loving kindness*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02617) *will* [*follow*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=07291) *me* [*all*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03605) *the* [*days*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03117) *of my* [*life*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02425)*, And I will* [*dwell*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03427) *in the* [*house*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=01004) *of the* [*Lord*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03068)[*forever*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=0753)*”* (Ps 23 (22), 1-6). Jesus is in the midst of the threatening waters of the cross. He has faith in God. He believes in his Word. The Word says that after *"his intimate torment he will see the light"*. He will not perish on the cross. He will not end in the tomb. *"You will not allow your Saint to see corruption."* Jesus does not ask for the storm to end. He knows that through the storm he will reach his glorious resurrection.

*On that day, as evening drew on, he said to them, "Let us cross to the other side." Leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat just as he was. And other boats were with him. A violent squall came up and waves were breaking over the boat, so that it was already filling up. Jesus was in the stern, asleep on a cushion. They woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" He woke up, rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Quiet! Be still!" The wind ceased and there was great calm. Then he asked them, "Why are you terrified? Do you not yet have faith?" They were filled with great awe and said to one another, "Who then is this whom even wind and sea obey?"*

The Apostles walk with Jesus, but only with their body. With their mind and heart, their spirit and rationality and intelligence they are far from his mystery. Jesus revealed of him that he is the Messiah of God, that he is superiour to Moses, Elijah, Elisha and all the other prophets and righteous people of the Old Testament. None of these men has been lost walking with the Lord. Nothing either of the earth, or of the sky, or of under the earth, has ever prevailed against them. Nature never overwhelmed them. They have always won over nature. If Jesus is true God, as well as a true man, if he has to fulfil his mission of salvation, the one that the Father has entrusted to him, might he ever die in the middle of the sea? Might ever God start a work without bringing it to completion?

Faith must see the invisible. It is a true human act, that is, an act of the whole of man: intelligence, wisdom, discernment, rationality and capacity for argumentation and deduction. The Apostles still see Jesus in single acts, they cannot put together all his manifestations, his revelations and his many miracles. They often don't even remember what happened a moment before. They are still not builders of faith. In truth, faith is like a house. As the house is built stone on stone and brick on brick, so is faith. It must be built truth on truth, word on word, sign on sign, miracle on miracle, prophecy on prophecy and revelation on revelation. A brick is not the house. A truth is not faith. Today many disciples of Jesus are like the Apostles, They are not builders of faith, indeed they are its demolishers. They think that faith is composed of a single truth or a single human feeling.

Mother of God, Angels and Saints, arrange that every Christian is a true builder of true faith.

**For the fall and rise of many in Israel**

**SUNDAY 2 FEBRUARY (Lk 2,22-40)**

The history of salvation advances in history through two obediences, which must merge and form only one: obedience to the Law, to the written Word and obedience to the Holy Spirit. Mary and Joseph walk on the path of these two obediences. Their family is the fruit of their obedience to the Law and the Holy Spirit. Simeon and Anna also walk on the same path: obedience to the Law, to the written Word and obedience to the Holy Spirit. Today, Mary and Joseph go to the temple to obey the Law that demands that every firstborn son is offered to the Lord. This law dates back to the night of Easter. The Lord had spared the firstborn of men and animals from death. Every firstborn of both men and animals had to be consecrated to the Lord. The firstborn of men was offered and redeemed. The firstborn of animals, if of a pure animal, was offered and sacrificed. If of an impure animal, it was offered and redeemed. Instead, Simone and Anna go to the temple by the motion of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, they must testify that truly, the Messiah is in the midst of his people. They must cry out that God has fulfilled his promises. When he said, he also did it. Jesus is the light that must enlighten the Father, his truth, his mercy and his faithfulness to every man.

*When the days were completed for their purification according to the law of Moses, they took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, just as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every male that opens the womb shall be consecrated to the Lord," and to offer the sacrifice of "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons," in accordance with the dictate in the law of the Lord. Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. This man was righteous and devout, awaiting the consolation of Israel, and the holy Spirit was upon him. It had been revealed to him by the holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Messiah of the Lord. He came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to perform the custom of the law in regard to him, he took him into his arms and blessed God, saying: "Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you prepared in sight of all the peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel."*

*The child's father and mother were amazed at what was said about him; and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted (and you yourself a sword will pierce) so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived seven years with her husband after her marriage, and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple, but worshiped night and day with fasting and prayer. And coming forward at that very time, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem. When they had fulfilled all the prescriptions of the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favour of God was upon him.*

In the Holy Spirit Simeon sees Jesus in the purity of his truth. He is the light that must enlighten the Father, so that every man can know him in his highest, purest and universal truth. But he is also the glory of his people Israel. Never might a people produce such a high, divine, eternal and full of grace and truth fruit. Jesus is the most sublime fruit not only of the children of Abraham, but also among all the children of Adam. Never will humanity produce another similar fruit. This is the one and only in eternity. This truth must also be confessed today. We live in a time of great indifferentism. We want to abolish the difference that must necessarily exist in creation and redemption. We are a humanity governed by foolishness and great ignorance. Jesus is also the sign of contradiction. Before him every heart is revealed in its goodness and in its wickedness, in its good will and in its evil will. Christ is the most pure truth of God and man. Whoever seeks the truth, welcomes Christ Jesus. Whoever does not seek the truth, will always reject Christ Jesus. It is an immortal rule. Every heart will manifest itself before Jesus according to its nature of light or darkness, yesterday, today, tomorrow and always.

Mother of God, Angels and Saints, make us with a pure heart to welcome Christ our truth.

**They began to beg him to leave their district**

**MONDAY 3 FEBRUARY (Mk 5,1-20)**

In the life of Jesus nothing happens by chance. He is always moved by the Holy Spirit. Today the Lord takes his disciples to the pagan world to show them the spiritual state of those people. In that region in which the true God is not known, Satan governs every man's mind, heart, will, feelings and desires. A legion of impure spirits has also taken over a man's body. When the impure spirit gets possession of a body, there are no human remedies that can dominate him. Neither chains nor chains are sufficient. Satan is the strongest than all men. Even if all men got together, no one could ever dominate him. Jesus comes to this region. How powerful is he? He is not powerful and neither is he strong. He is no more powerful and stronger than Satan. He is the Strong, the Strong God, He is the Almighty, the Almighty God. He is the Creator and the Lord of every impure spirit and everyone owes him obedience. They do not go to the pigs of their own free will. They want to go into them, but they ask the Strong God, their Lord and Creator, the Almighty God to let them go into them. Jesus allows it and they take possession of the pigs and urge them to jump off the cliff into the sea. In a single moment a herd of about two thousand pigs perishes. Jesus allows it to teach every man that the whole universe is not worth a man. All creation is not worth a human person. The human person is of divine, eternal and supernatural value. It is worth as much as the life of Christ Crucified is worth.

*They came to the other side of the sea, to the territory of the Gerasenes. When he got out of the boat, at once a man from the tombs who had an unclean spirit met him. The man had been dwelling among the tombs, and no one could restrain him any longer, even with a chain. In fact, he had frequently been bound with shackles and chains, but the chains had been pulled apart by him and the shackles smashed, and no one was strong enough to subdue him. Night and day among the tombs and on the hillsides he was always crying out and bruising himself with stones. Catching sight of Jesus from a distance, he ran up and prostrated himself before him, crying out in a loud voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me!" (He had been saying to him, "Unclean spirit, come out of the man!") He asked him, "What is your name?" He replied, "Legion is my name. There are many of us." And he pleaded earnestly with him not to drive them away from that territory.*

*Now a large herd of swine was feeding there on the hillside. And they pleaded with him, "Send us into the swine. Let us enter them." And he let them, and the unclean spirits came out and entered the swine. The herd of about two thousand rushed down a steep bank into the sea, where they were drowned. The swineherds ran away and reported the incident in the town and throughout the countryside. And people came out to see what had happened. As they approached Jesus, they caught sight of the man who had been possessed by Legion, sitting there clothed and in his right mind. And they were seized with fear. Those who witnessed the incident explained to them what had happened to the possessed man and to the swine. Then they began to beg him to leave their district. As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed pleaded to remain with him. But he would not permit him but told him instead, "Go home to your family and announce to them all that the Lord in his pity has done for you." Then the man went off and began to proclaim in the Decapolis what Jesus had done for him; and all were amazed.*

Pagans do not know the value of a human life. For them the loss of about two thousand swine is very heavy. Their economy has been in crisis. But what is the use of an economy without taking into account the value of a human life? What is the use of an economy in which human life is sacrificed to it? The pagans are afraid of Jesus and pray him to move away from their territories. They live on an order of sin. If this order is destroyed, they cannot live. But Jesus came to abolish the order of sin and replace it with the order of truth and grace. This is the great battle of non faith against the faith. Non-faith strives to preserve the order of sin. Faith works so that someone decides to abandon the order of sin and enters the order of grace and truth. The healed man wishes he could leave his territory. Instead, he must stay and show every man that we can get out of the order of sin and immorality. But you can go out only if Jesus comes and frees. Without Jesus no one will come out of the order of sin and immorality.

Mother of God, Angels and Saints, ask Christ Jesus to free us from the order of sin.

**If I but touch his clothes**

**TUESDAY 4 FEBRUARY (Mk 5,21-43)**

Being a true human act, faith differs from person to person. Never might the faith of one be the faith of another. Every day it must be built up and constructed, adding truth to truth, but also virtue to virtue, wisdom to wisdom and light to light. Thus St. Peter urges Christians who want to build and erect their faith: *“His divine power has bestowed on us everything that makes for life and devotion, through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and power. Through these, he has bestowed on us the precious and very great promises, so that through them you may come to share in the divine nature, after escaping from the corruption that is in the world because of evil desire. For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, virtue with knowledge, knowledge with self-control, self-control with endurance, endurance with devotion, devotion with mutual affection, mutual affection with love. If these are yours and increase in abundance, they will keep you from being idle or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Anyone who lacks them is blind and shortsighted, forgetful of the cleansing of his past sins. Therefore, brothers, be all the more eager to make your call and election firm, for, in doing so, you will never stumble. For, in this way, entry into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ will be richly provided for you”* (2Pt 1,3-11). The more faith will be firmly built and the more stable it will remain forever. Jesus asks us to build our faith on his Word, on his Gospel. Today we are faced with two faiths, that of a woman and that of a man.

*When Jesus had crossed again (in the boat) to the other side, a large crowd gathered around him, and he stayed close to the sea. One of the synagogue officials, named Jairus, came forward. Seeing him he fell at his feet and pleaded earnestly with him, saying, "My daughter is at the point of death. Please, come lay your hands on her that she may get well and live." He went off with him, and a large crowd followed him and pressed upon him. There was a woman afflicted with haemorrhages for twelve years. She had suffered greatly at the hands of many doctors and had spent all that she had. Yet she was not helped but only grew worse. She had heard about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak. She said, "If I but touch his clothes, I shall be cured." Immediately her flow of blood dried up. She felt in her body that she was healed of her affliction.*

*Jesus, aware at once that power had gone out from him, turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who has touched my clothes?" But his disciples said to him, "You see how the crowd is pressing upon you, and yet you ask, 'Who touched me?'" And he looked around to see who had done it. The woman, realizing what had happened to her, approached in fear and trembling. She fell down before Jesus and told him the whole truth. He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has saved you. Go in peace and be cured of your affliction." While he was still speaking, people from the synagogue official's house arrived and said, "Your daughter has died; why trouble the teacher any longer?" Disregarding the message that was reported, Jesus said to the synagogue official, "Do not be afraid; just have faith." He did not allow anyone to accompany him inside except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. When they arrived at the house of the synagogue official, he caught sight of a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. So he went in and said to them, "Why this commotion and weeping? The child is not dead but asleep." And they ridiculed him. Then he put them all out. He took along the child's father and mother and those who were with him and entered the room where the child was. He took the child by the hand and said to her, "Talitha koum," which means, "Little girl, I say to you, arise!" The girl, a child of twelve, arose immediately and walked around. (At that) they were utterly astounded. He gave strict orders that no one should know this and said that she should be given something to eat.*

The woman is of an invincible faith. If she can even touch only the hem of Jesus' cloak, she will be healed. No one sees. No one knows. Nobody recognizes. But she lacks in a truth. The fruits of faith must be manifested so that faith can be born in many other hearts. No one believes for himself. We must also believe in giving birth to many other faiths. Jairus possesses a faith which still lacks many truths. It is a faith that must be helped, comforted, sustained and nurtured. Whoever must foster faith is the one who possesses faith in its full truth. For this reason we must grow from faith to faith: to be a valid support for every faith that is still weak.

Mother of God, Angels and Saints, make us of strong faith to be of help to the faith of the weak.

**And they took offense at him**

**WEDNESDAY 5 FEBRUARY (Mk 6,1-6)**

Can a meek and humble at heart man, born into a poor family, with no apparent and visible human grandeur, be the bearer of a great mystery of salvation? Can Jesus, the son of a carpenter, be a great prophet? Can he also be the Messiah, the King expected by all? He can because God has always chosen simple people and has constituted them bearers of his voice. He can because Joseph is from the lineage of David, even though the reign of David has no longer existed for centuries. Humility and simplicity pose no problem. Even David was so humble and simple as to be deemed by his father not worthy to attend the banquet with Samuel: *"Samuel did as the Lord had commanded him. When he entered Bethlehem, the elders of the city came trembling to meet him and inquired, "Is your visit peaceful, O seer?" He replied: "Yes! I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. So cleanse yourselves and join me today for the banquet." He also had Jesse and his sons cleanse themselves and invited them to the sacrifice. As they came, he looked at Eliab and thought, "Surely the Lord's anointed is here before him." But the Lord said to Samuel: "Do not judge from his appearance or from his lofty stature, because I have rejected him. Not as man sees does God see, because man sees the appearance but the Lord looks into the heart." Then Jesse called Abinadab and presented him before Samuel, who said, "The Lord has not chosen him." Next Jesse presented Shammah, but Samuel said, "The Lord has not chosen this one either." In the same way Jesse presented seven sons before Samuel, but Samuel said to Jesse, "The Lord has not chosen any one of these."*

*Then Samuel asked Jesse, "Are these all the sons you have?" Jesse replied, "There is still the youngest, who is tending the sheep." Samuel said to Jesse, "Send for him; we will not begin the sacrificial banquet until he arrives here." Jesse sent and had the young man brought to them. He was ruddy, a youth handsome to behold and making a splendid appearance. The Lord said, "There-anoint him, for this is he!" Then Samuel, with the horn of oil in hand, anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and from that day on, the spirit of the Lord rushed upon David* (1Sam 16,1-13). Who was the first great king of Israel? A shepherd of sheep and goats. David didn't make himself great. He was not great when he was anointed king. It is the Lord who made him great. It is He who makes great those chosen by Him. This truth is the essence of the faith of the people of God and without this truth there is no faith. For those of Nazareth, Jesus is a cause of scandal only because of the lack of knowledge of their history. They read the Scriptures, but only hear their words. They do not enter into the truth that is contained in them. Theirs is an empty, sterile reading of the Word of their God.

*He departed from there and came to his native place, accompanied by his disciples. When the Sabbath came he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astonished. They said, "Where did this man get all this? What kind of wisdom has been given him? What mighty deeds are wrought by his hands! Is he not the carpenter, the son of Mary, and the brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him. Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honour except in his native place and among his own kin and in his own house." So he was not able to perform any mighty deed there, apart from curing a few sick people by laying his hands on them. He was amazed at their lack of faith. He went around to the villages in the vicinity teaching.*

Today, if we are take offense at Christ Jesus, we are ashamed to name him in public, we refrain from making any reference to his relationship with the Father, the Holy Spirit, the Church and the salvation obtained in his name, the reason must be found in non-knowledge of the Scriptures. We quote the Gospel, but only in those phrases that justify our non-faith, non-truth and non-will to affirm the mystery of Christ the Lord, in which the mystery of man is. Scriptures are not the ones that are unclear. The hearts of those who read them and those who teach them are unclear. A distorted teaching of Scriptures will necessarily lead to a wrong, partial, incomplete, heretical and completely false view of Christ Jesus. From a false knowledge the scandal and every distancing towards Him will always be born. We get detached from Him.

Mother of God, Angels and Saints arrange that Christians know Christ according to full truth.

**They went off and preached repentance**

**THURSDAY 6 FEBRUARY (Mk 6,7-13)**

Conversion is always to the Word that is announced. The prophets announced the conversion to the broken, forgotten and neglected covenant, transformed into a sterile cult. The Lord through his prophet denies every cult that is not a sign of the lived and continually renewed and updated covenant in its truth: *“What care I for the number of your sacrifices? says the Lord. I have had enough of whole-burnt rams and fat of fatlings; In the blood of calves, lambs and goats I find no pleasure. When you come in to visit me, who asks these things of you? Trample my courts no more! Bring no more worthless offerings; your incense is loathsome to me. New moon and Sabbath, calling of assemblies, octaves with wickedness: these I cannot bear. Your new moons and festivals I detest; they weigh me down, I tire of the load. When you spread out your hands, I close my eyes to you; Though you pray the more, I will not listen. Your hands are full of blood! Wash yourselves clean! Put away your misdeeds from before my eyes; cease doing evil; learn to do good. Make justice your aim: redress the wronged, hear the orphan's plea, defend the widow. Come now, let us set things right, says the Lord: Though your sins be like scarlet, they may become white as snow; Though they be crimson red, they may become white as wool. If you are willing, and obey, you shall eat the good things of the land; But if you refuse and resist, the sword shall consume you: for the mouth of the Lord has spoken!”* (Is 1,11-20).

Instead, the conversion preached by Jesus and the Twelve is different. They must run through the land of the fathers inviting every man to convert to the kingdom of God that is near. The door to enter the coming kingdom is their Word. Their Word is that of Jesus. How are people certain that the Word announced by the Twelve is the door to enter the kingdom? But is the kingdom of God really near? Will it not be a deception on the part of people without conscience and without scruples? That their Word is true and that the kingdom is near, their works that are not the works of a man and not even of many men attest to it. They are works of God. Healing the sick, driving out unclean spirits, bringing peace to hearts, instilling true hope and convincing of the truth of the Word announced by them are not works of man, but of God. God is coming with the power of Word and works. Who wants, can be converted. There is no deception in the Word, because there is no deception in the works. The Word is of God, because the works are of God. The lifestyle of the Twelve also attests that everything is true. They are not going to people to ask for something, but to give everything to people. Gratuitousness is the sign of the kingdom, because God always gives everything and everything for free: *“All you who are thirsty, come to the water! You who have no money, come, receive grain and eat; Come, without paying and without cost, drink wine and milk! Why spend your money for what is not bread; your wages for what fails to satisfy? Heed me, and you shall eat well, you shall delight in rich fare. Come to me heedfully, listen, that you may have life. I will renew with you the everlasting covenant, the benefits assured to David”* (Is 55,1-3). The signs of truth are all there. There is no lack of one of them.

*He summoned the Twelve and began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over unclean spirits. He instructed them to take nothing for the journey but a walking stick - no food, no sack, no money in their belts. They were, however, to wear sandals but not a second tunic. He said to them, "Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave from there. Whatever place does not welcome you or listen to you, leave there and shake the dust off your feet in testimony against them." So they went off and preached repentance. They drove out many demons, and they anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.*

Yesterday's modality, today's modality, usual modality. Whoever wants to credibly announce the mysteries of the kingdom of God, he must also show the kingdom of God. He will show it by doing its works. What are the works today that attest that we are of the kingdom that we announce? The great love, the great communion among the very disciples who proclaim the kingdom. Two disciples who live by mutual love is the true sign.

Mother of God, Angels and Saints arrange that the never the sign of love is missing in the disciples.

**Herodias harboured a grudge against him and wanted to kill him**

**FRIDAY 7 FEBRUARY (Mk 6,14-29)**

It is a truth. A sin never remains alone. Is is often hidden with another sin. this is the case of David. First he committed the sin of adultery and then of murder in order to hide adultery: “*The next morning David wrote a letter to Joab which he sent by Uriah. In it he directed: "Place Uriah up front, where the fighting is fierce. Then pull back and leave him to be struck down dead." So while Joab was besieging the city, he assigned Uriah to a place where he knew the defenders were strong. When the men of the city made a sortie against Joab, some officers of David's army fell, and among them Uriah the Hittite died”* (2Sam 11,14-17). If whoever falls into sin remains in it, he becomes a great temptation for his brothers. In the garden of Eden the woman fell into disobedience, she was made temptation for the man: *“The woman saw that the tree was good for food, pleasing to the eyes, and desirable for gaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized that they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves”* (Gen 3,6-7). Finally, a third truth must be added: whoever does not take away his sin from his home, sooner or later will fall victim to it. Herod let himself be tempted by Herodias, his brother's wife. He took her as his wife and brought her to his home. The woman's hatred eventually led him, by his foolishness, to kill the prophet of the living God: John the Baptist. Sin rules in the world with strict rules. If these rules are not broken, sooner or later, it suffices knowing how to wait, you will be their victims. Herodias knows that sooner or later Herod will fall. It suffices to wait. She lives with this certainty. Today the king is afraid of killing John. Tomorrow there will be a greater fear that will lead him to kill.

*King Herod heard about it, for his fame had become widespread, and people were saying, "John the Baptist has been raised from the dead; that is why mighty powers are at work in him." Others were saying, "He is Elijah"; still others, "He is a prophet like any of the prophets." But when Herod learned of it, he said, "It is John whom I beheaded. He has been raised up." Herod was the one who had John arrested and bound in prison on account of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, whom he had married. John had said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." Herodias harboured a grudge against him and wanted to kill him but was unable to do so. Herod feared John, knowing him to be a righteous and holy man, and kept him in custody. When he heard him speak he was very much perplexed, yet he liked to listen to him.*

*She had an opportunity one day when Herod, on his birthday, gave a banquet for his courtiers, his military officers, and the leading men of Galilee. Herodias's own daughter came in and performed a dance that delighted Herod and his guests. The king said to the girl, "Ask of me whatever you wish and I will grant it to you." He even swore (many things) to her, "I will grant you whatever you ask of me, even to half of my kingdom." She went out and said to her mother, "What shall I ask for?" She replied, "The head of John the Baptist." The girl hurried back to the king's presence and made her request, "I want you to give me at once on a platter the head of John the Baptist." The king was deeply distressed, but because of his oaths and the guests he did not wish to break his word to her. So he promptly dispatched an executioner with orders to bring back his head. He went off and beheaded him in the prison. He brought in the head on a platter and gave it to the girl. The girl in turn gave it to her mother. When his disciples heard about it, they came and took his body and laid it in a tomb.*

A rule that must never be forgotten reveals to us that sinners always draw their strength from sinners. A sin is not a stimulus to the virtues, it is instead an incitement to sin. Salome, Herodias’ daughter, dances a lascivious and lustful dance. The king, who does not live by chastity, lets himself be carried away by that dance and promises with an oath that he would have given her whatever she had asked, even if it was half of his reign. She consults with her mother and asks for John's head. Whoever does not want to fall into sin, for which he must repent for eternity, will have to pay close attention not only to cultivating the right friendships, but also to keeping away from bad company. In addition, he must make a strong commitment to acquiring every virtue. Vice devours. Sin kills. Transgression weakens and passion seduces. The chain of evil does not break.

Mother of God, Angels and Saints, give us the fortitude in the Holy Spirit to live by virtue.

**They were like sheep without a shepherd**

**SATURDAY 8 FEBRUARY (Mk 6,30-34)**

The condition of the sheep without a shepherd is quite wretched. It is without a present of life and also without any hope of a better future. Sheep and shepherd must be one. The Shepherd must consume his life for the sheep. We know that Jesus goes beyond the gift of life for the sheep. He actually makes himself flesh to be eaten and blood to be drunk. Every sheep that wants to live for Him must really eat Him. This truth is thus affirmed in the Gospel according to John: *"Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I have life because of the Father, so also the one who feeds on me will have life because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Unlike your ancestors who ate and still died, whoever eats this bread will live forever"* (Jn 6,53-58).

This truth is reaffirmed even when Jesus announces himself as the Good Shepherd: *"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). The children of Israel were like sheep without a shepherd because the shepherds given to them by God were all intent on treating themselves. The problem of the shepherds has been, is and will always be the true great problem of the heavenly Father. For the shepherd the sheep are saved and for the shepherd they are lost. They live for the shepherd and die for the shepherd. The shepherd is everything to the sheep.

*The apostles gathered together with Jesus and reported all they had done and taught. He said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." People were coming and going in great numbers, and they had no opportunity even to eat. So they went off in the boat by themselves to a deserted place. People saw them leaving and many came to know about it. They hastened there on foot from all the towns and arrived at the place before them. When he disembarked and saw the vast crowd, his heart was moved with pity for them, for they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.*

It is the shepherd who makes the flock. Without the pastor one is also without the flock. Today in God's people every sheep walks for itself. It is a sign that the shepherd is missing to them. Sometimes there is the minister of the Word, there is the administrator of the sacraments, but the pastor is missing. What ensures that a minister of the Word and an administrator of sacraments becomes a true pastor? Jesus revealed it to us. It is his giving his life for the sheep. It is his dying and living for the flock that was entrusted to him. We can be ministers of the Word, but not pastors. We can also be administrators of sacraments, but not pastors. The shepherd has the heart of Christ that beats in his chest and the Holy Spirit that fills him with every concern for the sheep. The shepherd lives with the same love that the Father has for his flock. The love of the Father is so great as not to be spared in anything. He gave his Only Son for his sheep. The true shepherd has the heart of God.

Mother of God, Angels and Saints arrange that every pastor is a true shepherd in Christ Jesus.

**You are the salt of the earth**

**SUNDAY 9 FEBRUARY (Mt 5,13-16)**

The disciple of Jesus is sent into the world by his Master and Lord to give to every man the taste of truth, justice, mercy, charity and hope, first of all tasting himself the beauty of the Gospel and of the Law of the Lord. If He does not taste the Gospel, never might he invite anyone else to taste it. If he hates truth, justice, mercy, charity and hope, might he ever teach or invite a single person to taste the beauty of the Lord and his great mercy? To give the taste of God and of Christ Jesus, in the Holy Spirit, one must be entirely of God and of Christ the Lord, in the Holy Spirit. The man of God invites to taste the Lord: *“I will* [*bless*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=01288) *the* [[*Lord*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03068)](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03068) *at* [*all*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03605)[*times*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=06256)*; His* [*praise*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=08416) *shall* [*continually*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=08548) *be in my* [*mouth*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=06310)*. My* [*soul*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05315) *will* [*make*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=01984) *its* [*boast*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=01984) *in the* [[*Lord*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03068)](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03068)*; The* [*humble*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=06035) *will* [*hear*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=08085) *it and* [*rejoice*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=08055)*. O* [*magnify*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=01431) *the* [[*Lord*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03068)](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03068) *with me, And let us* [*exalt*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=07311) *His* [*name*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=08034)[*together*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03164)*. I* [*sought*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=01875) *the* [[*Lord*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03068)](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03068)*, and He* [*answered*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=06030) *me, And* [*delivered*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05337) *me from* [*all*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03605) *my* [*fears*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=04034)*. They* [*looked*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05027) *to Him and were* [*radiant*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05102)*, And their* [*faces*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=06440) *will* [*never*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=0408) *be* [*ashamed*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02659)*.* [*This*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02088)[*poor*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=06041)[*man*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=06041)[*cried*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=07121)*, and the* [[*Lord*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03068)](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03068)[*heard*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=08085) *him And* [*saved*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03467) *him out of* [*all*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03605) *his* [*troubles*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=06869)*. The* [*angel*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=04397) *of the* [[*Lord*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03068)](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03068)[*encamps*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02583)[*around*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05439) *those who* [*fear*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03372) *Him, And* [*rescues*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02502) *them. O* [*taste*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02938) *and* [*see*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=07200) *that the* [*Lord*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03068) *is* [*good*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02896)*; How* [*blessed*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=0835) *is the* [*man*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=01397) *who* [*takes*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02620)[*refuge*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02620) *in Him!”*

*“O* [*fear*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03372) *the* [[*Lord*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03068)](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03068)*, you His* [*saints*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=06918)*; For to those who* [*fear*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03372) *Him* [*there*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=0369) *is* [*no*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=0369)[*want*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=04270)*. The* [*young*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03715)[*lions*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03715) *do* [*lack*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=07326) *and* [*suffer*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=07456)[*hunger*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=07456)*; But they who* [*seek*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=01875) *the* [[*Lord*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03068)](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03068) *shall not be in* [*want*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02637) *of* [*any*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03605)[*good*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02896)[*thing*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02896)*.* [*Come*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=01980)*, you* [*children*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=01121)*,* [*listen*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=08085) *to me; I will* [*teach*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03925) *you the* [*fear*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03374) *of the* [[*Lord*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03068)](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03068)*.* [*Who*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=04310) *is the* [*man*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=0376) *who* [*desires*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02655)[*life*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02425) *And* [*loves*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=0157) *length of* [*days*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03117) *that he may* [*see*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=07200)[*good*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02896)*?* [*Keep*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05341) *your* [*tongue*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03956) *from* [*evil*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=07451) *And your* [*lips*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=08193) *from* [*speaking*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=01696)[*deceit*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=04820)*.* [*Depart*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05493) *from* [*evil*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=07451) *and* [*do*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=06213)[*good*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02896)*;* [*Seek*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=01245)[*peace*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=07965) *and* [*pursue*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=07291) *it. The* [*eyes*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05869) *of the* [[*Lord*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03068)](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03068) *are* [*toward*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=0413) *the* [*righteous*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=06662) *And His* [*ears*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=0241) *are open to their* [*cry*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=07775)*. The* [*face*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=06440) *of the* [[*Lord*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03068)](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03068) *is against* [*evildoers*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=06213)*, To* [*cut*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03772)[*off*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03772) *the* [*memory*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02143) *of them from the* [*earth*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=0776)*. The righteous* [*cry*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=06817)*, and the* [[*Lord*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03068)](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03068)[*hears*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=08085) *And* [*delivers*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05337) *them out of* [*all*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03605) *their* [*troubles*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=06869)*. The* [[*Lord*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03068)](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03068) *is* [*near*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=07138) *to the* [*brokenhearted*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=07665) *And* [*saves*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03467) *those* [*who*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=01793) *are* [*crushed*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=01793) *in* [*spirit*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=07307)*.* [*Many*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=07227) *are the* [*afflictions*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=07463) *of the* [*righteous*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=06662)*, But the* [[*Lord*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03068)](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03068)[*delivers*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05337) *him out of them* [*all*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03605)*. He* [*keeps*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=08104)[*all*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03605) *his* [*bones*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=06106)*, Not* [*one*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=0259) *of them is* [*broken*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=07665)*.* [*Evil*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=07463) *shall* [*slay*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=04191) *the* [*wicked*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=07563)*, And those who* [*hate*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=08130) *the* [*righteous*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=06662) *will be* [*condemned*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=0816)*. The* [[*Lord*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03068)](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03068)[*redeems*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=06299) *the* [*soul*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05315) *of His* [*servants*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05650)*, And* [*none*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03808) *of those who* [*take*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02620)[*refuge*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02620) *in Him will be* [*condemned*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=0816)*”* (Ps 34 (33) 1-23).Jesus the Lord is entirely of the Father. Every day, he tastes how good his Father is. Every day, he infuses the taste of the Father's love to every man.

*"You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned? It is no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house. Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father.*

The Apostle John tasted Christ Jesus, he tasted him with all his humanity: heart, mind, soul, sight and touch. He who tasted Christ the Lord, infuses his taste to every one of his disciples. Not only that, but also to every other man who wants to taste all the love that the Father gives him in Christ, through the Holy Spirit: *"What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we looked upon and touched with our hands concerns the Word of life - for the life was made visible; we have seen it and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was made visible to us - what we have seen and heard we proclaim now to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; for our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We are writing this so that our joy may be complete"* (1Jn 1: 1-4). You are not the salt of the earth by taking a word from the Gospel and making it resound in the air. The Word that is given must be the manifestation of all the taste for Christ the Lord that is in our heart, in our soul and in our spirit. The more we grow in Christ, through the Holy Spirit, the more we give the taste of Christ to the world. If the Christian remains in the world, he lives in the manner of the world, he will give the taste of sin of the world, never the taste of the virtues and wisdom that come from the Gospel. We taste Christ Jesus, we give his the taste.

Mother of God, Angels and Saints make us taste Christ to be His taste in the world.

**As many as touched it were healed**

**MONDAY 10 FEBRUARY (Mk 6,53-56)**

The works and the methods of execution reveal the person. They say about him what he can do, what he cannot do, but also in how much time and with what intensity. To raise a dead child, the prophet Elija lays three times on the child and calls on the Lord for life to return to his body: “*Sometime later the son of the mistress of the house fell sick, and his sickness grew more severe until he stopped breathing. So she said to Elijah, "Why have you done this to me, O man of God? Have you come to me to call attention to my guilt and to kill my son?" "Give me your son," Elijah said to her. Taking him from her lap, he carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his own bed. He called out to the Lord: "O Lord, my God, will you afflict even the widow with whom I am staying by killing her son?" Then he stretched himself out upon the child three times and called out to the Lord: "O Lord, my God, let the life breath return to the body of this child." The Lord heard the prayer of Elijah; the life breath returned to the child's body and he revived. Taking the child, Elijah brought him down into the house from the upper room and gave him to his mother. "See!" Elijah said to her, "your son is alive." "Now indeed I know that you are a man of God," the woman replied to Elijah. "The word of the Lord comes truly from your mouth"* (1Kings 17,17-24). The resurrection occurs by contact, but it is a prolonged, long contact. Jesus does not relax on any dead person. It is enough for him to just touch him with his hand, or to call him to come out of the grave. Today, the Gospel tells us that He does not even touch people. The people are the ones who throw themselves on Him and those who touched him were saved. This mode reveals to us that Jesus is infinitely greater than Elijah. If the word of Elijah is confessed as the Word of God, much more must the Word of Jesus be confessed. Here is the end of these miracles through contact with the clothes of Jesus: leading every man to say that Jesus is the true prophet. Not only a true prophet, but the greatest prophet sent by God among his people.

*After making the crossing, they came to land at Gennesaret and tied up there. As they were leaving the boat, people immediately recognized him. They scurried about the surrounding country and began to bring in the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. Whatever villages or towns or countryside he entered, they laid the sick in the marketplaces and begged him that they might touch only the tassel on his cloak; and as many as touched it were healed.*

Elisha also raises a dead child by contact: *"Gird your loins," Elisha said to Gehazi, "take my staff with you and be off; if you meet anyone, do not greet him, and if anyone greets you, do not answer. Lay my staff upon the boy." But the boy's mother cried out: "As the Lord lives and as you yourself live, I will not release you." So he started to go back with her. Meanwhile, Gehazi had gone on ahead and had laid the staff upon the boy, but there was no sound or sign of life. He returned to meet Elisha and informed him that the boy had not awakened. When Elisha reached the house, he found the boy lying dead. He went in, closed the door on them both, and prayed to the Lord. Then he lay upon the child on the bed, placing his mouth upon the child's mouth, his eyes upon the eyes, and his hands upon the hands. As Elisha stretched himself over the child, the body became warm. He arose, paced up and down the room, and then once more lay down upon the boy, who now sneezed seven times and opened his eyes. Elisha summoned Gehazi and said, "Call the Shunammite." She came at his call, and Elisha said to her, "Take your son." She came in and fell at his feet in gratitude; then she took her son and left the room”* (2Kings 4,29-37). If Jesus is the greatest of all the prophets sent by God, he surpasses scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, Zealots, chief priests, elders of the people and every other man. Not only all these people never performed a miracle of healing and some other sign on man or on nature, they could not even work the miracle of conversion in the soul. They moved people away from God rather than approaching them. They excluded instead of including. They demolished David's hut rather than building it. The work reveals its author. Jesus is the greatest of every man who came before or who will come after Him. He is the only true Man and the only true God.

Mother of God, Angels and Saints arrange that the Christians manifest all the greatness of Jesus.

**FEBRUARY 2020**

***SECOND DECADE OF FEBRUARY***

**This people honours me with their lip**

**TUESDAY 11 FEBRUARY (Mk 7,1-13)**

The prophet Isaiah reveals all the "disappointment" of God before his vineyard. Instead of producing good grapes, it produced idolatry, immorality, injustices and crimes: *“Let me now sing of my friend, my friend's song concerning his vineyard. My friend had a vineyard on a fertile hillside; He spaded it, cleared it of stones, and planted the choicest vines; Within it he built a watchtower, and hewed out a wine press. Then he looked for the crop of grapes, but what it yielded was wild grapes. Now, inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard: What more was there to do for my vineyard that I had not done? Why, when I looked for the crop of grapes, did it bring forth wild grapes? Now, I will let you know what I mean to do to my vineyard: Take away its hedge, give it to grazing, break through its wall, let it be trampled! Yes, I will make it a ruin: it shall not be pruned or hoed, but overgrown with thorns and briers; I will command the clouds not to send rain upon it. The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are his cherished plant; He looked for judgment, but see, bloodshed! for justice, but hark, the outcry!”* (Is 5,1-7).

The prophet announces the Word of God, but there is no conversion to it. God waits in vain for the return of his people. But their heart is not turned towards the Lord, but towards the idols: *"Since this people draws near with words only and honors me with their lips alone, though their hearts are far from me, And their reverence for me has become routine observance of the precepts of men, Therefore I will again deal with this people in surprising and wondrous fashion: The wisdom of its wise men shall perish and the understanding of its prudent men be hid. Woe to those who would hide their plans too deep for the Lord! Who work in the dark, saying, "Who sees us, or who knows us?" Your perversity is as though the potter were taken to be the clay: As though what is made should say of its maker, "He made me not!" Or the vessel should say of the potter, "He does not understand"”* (Is 29,10-16). Citing the prophecy of Isaiah, Jesus reveals the total blindness of the people, which is without judgment, without intelligence, incapable of understanding that it is the Law of God that must be observed and not the tradition of men. The prophecy does not stop at the denunciation, it also opens hearts to the hope given by the conversion to the Word of Christ the Lord. Despite the moral abyss, we can be converted, we can return and we can knock again at the heart of the Father.

*Now when the Pharisees with some scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around him, they observed that some of his disciples ate their meals with unclean, that is, unwashed, hands. (For the Pharisees and, in fact, all Jews, do not eat without carefully washing their hands, keeping the tradition of the elders. And on coming from the marketplace they do not eat without purifying themselves. And there are many other things that they have traditionally observed, the purification of cups and jugs and kettles (and beds).) So the Pharisees and scribes questioned him, "Why do your disciples not follow the tradition of the elders but instead eat a meal with unclean hands?" He responded, "Well did Isaiah prophesy about you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honours me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; In vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines human precepts.' You disregard God's commandment but cling to human tradition." He went on to say, "How well you have set aside the commandment of God in order to uphold your tradition! For Moses said, 'Honour your father and your mother,' and 'Whoever curses father or mother shall die.' Yet you say, 'If a person says to father or mother, "Any support you might have had from me is qorban"' (meaning, dedicated to God), you allow him to do nothing more for his father or mother. You nullify the word of God in favour of your tradition that you have handed on. And you do many such things."*

Scribes and Pharisees lead the people towards perdition. Jesus the Lord wants to lead it to reason, to think and to discern. Sound morality, which springs from obedience to the Law of the Covenant, is all for a people. When the morality of obedience to the Law falls, the Lord's people dies. Scribes and Pharisees lead a spiritual death people. It is their failure as guides. Today the same risk, rather an even greater one is being run. Today, we too are starting to lead a spiritual death people.

Mother of God, Angels and Saints, do not allow us to reach to such a great disrepair.

**Are even you likewise without understanding?**

 **WEDNESDAY 12 FEBRUARY (Mk 7,14-23)**

Without the perennial light of the Holy Spirit, man is enveloped in total blindness, not only for supernatural, heavenly and divine things, but also for the things of the earth. St Paul says to the Corinthians: *"But as it is written: "What eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, and what has not entered the human heart, what God has prepared for those who love him," this God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit scrutinizes everything, even the depths of God. Among human beings, who knows what pertains to a person except the spirit of the person that is within? Similarly, no one knows what pertains to God except the Spirit of God. We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the things freely given us by God. And we speak about them not with words taught by human wisdom, but with words taught by the Spirit, describing spiritual realities in spiritual terms. Now the natural person does not accept what pertains to the Spirit of God, for to him it is foolishness, and he cannot understand it, because it is judged spiritually. The spiritual person, however, can judge everything but is not subject to judgment by anyone. For "who has known the mind of the Lord, so as to counsel him?" But we have the mind of Christ”* (1Cor 2,9-16). The Apostles of the Lord should understand, but the words of Jesus remain veiled to their mind. They cannot enter into the truth of things. Things that enter the body are not polluting. Pollutant is what comes out of the heart. Very simple truth difficult to put in the mind devoid of the Spirit of God.

*He summoned the crowd again and said to them, "Hear me, all of you, and understand. Nothing that enters one from outside can defile that person; but the things that come out from within are what defile." When he got home away from the crowd his disciples questioned him about the parable. He said to them, "Are even you likewise without understanding? Do you not realize that everything that goes into a person from outside cannot defile, since it enters not the heart but the stomach and passes out into the latrine?" (Thus he declared all foods clean.) "But what comes out of a person, that is what defiles. From within people, from their hearts, come evil thoughts, unchastity, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, licentiousness, envy, blasphemy, arrogance, folly. All these evils come from within and they defile."*

In the Second Letter to the Corinthians St. Paul reaffirms that the whole mystery of salvation is understood in the Holy Spirit: *“Such confidence we have through Christ toward God. Not that of ourselves we are qualified to take credit for anything as coming from us; rather, our qualification comes from God, who has indeed qualified us as ministers of a new covenant, not of letter but of spirit; for the letter brings death, but the Spirit gives life. Now if the ministry of death, carved in letters on stone, was so glorious that the Israelites could not look intently at the face of Moses because of its glory that was going to fade, how much more will the ministry of the Spirit be glorious? For if the ministry of condemnation was glorious, the ministry of righteousness will abound much more in glory. Indeed, what was endowed with glory has come to have no glory in this respect because of the glory that surpasses it. For if what was going to fade was glorious, how much more will what endures be glorious. Therefore, since we have such hope, we act very boldly and not like Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the Israelites could not look intently at the cessation of what was fading. Rather, their thoughts were rendered dull, for to this present day the same veil remains unlifted when they read the old covenant, because through Christ it is taken away. To this day, in fact, whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their hearts, but whenever a person turns to the Lord the veil is removed. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. All of us, gazing with unveiled face on the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, as from the Lord who is the Spirit”* (2Cor 3,4-18).

Only the Spirit can open our mind to the understanding of every mystery. But the Spirit is a gift of the Father through Christ the Lord. Christ is the source of every true view and every true understanding. Taking away Christ is building a world of blind people.

Mother of God, Angels and Saints, obtain for us the Spirit of vision and understanding.

**Let the children be fed first**

**THURSDAY 13 FEBRUARY (Mk 7,24-30)**

God says: *"I am the judge of the whole earth".* He reveals to Abraham his decision to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. The prayer of Abraham reveals to the whole world that truly He is the Judge with the right judgment: *"Will you sweep away the innocent with the guilty? Suppose there were fifty innocent people in the city; would you wipe out the place, rather than spare it for the sake of the fifty innocent people within it? Far be it from you to do such a thing, to make the innocent die with the guilty, so that the innocent and the guilty would be treated alike! Should not the judge of all the world act with justice?" The Lord replied, "If I find fifty innocent people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake." Still he went on, "Since I have thus dared to speak to my Lord, what if there are no more than twenty?" "I will not destroy it," he answered, "for the sake of the twenty." But he still persisted: "Please, let not my Lord grow angry if I speak up this last time. What if there are at least ten there?" "For the sake of those ten," he replied, "I will not destroy it"”* (Cf. Gen 18,23-32). Now the whole world knows that the Lord is a judge with just judgments.

God says: *"To your descendants I will give this land".* Is the Lord able to keep his promises despite the sin of his people? Moses' prayer reveals that the Lord keeps what he says: *"I see how stiff-necked this people is," continued the Lord to Moses. "Let me alone, then, that my wrath may blaze up against them to consume them. Then I will make of you a great nation." But Moses implored the Lord, his God, saying, "Why, O Lord, should your wrath blaze up against your own people, whom you brought out of the land of Egypt with such great power and with so strong a hand? Why should the Egyptians say, 'With evil intent he brought them out, that he might kill them in the mountains and exterminate them from the face of the earth'? Let your blazing wrath die down; relent in punishing your people. Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac and Israel, and how you swore to them by your own self, saying, 'I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky; and all this land that I promised, I will give your descendants as their perpetual heritage.'" So the Lord relented in the punishment he had threatened to inflict on his people”* (Ex 32,9-14). Now we know that the Lord is always faithful to his every Word. What He says he is capable of doing it, making it happen.

*From that place he went off to the district of Tyre. He entered a house and wanted no one to know about it, but he could not escape notice. Soon a woman whose daughter had an unclean spirit heard about him. She came and fell at his feet. The woman was a Greek, a Syrophoenician by birth, and she begged him to drive the demon out of her daughter. He said to her, "Let the children be fed first. For it is not right to take the food of the children and throw it to the dogs." She replied and said to him, "Lord, even the dogs under the table eat the children's scraps." Then he said to her, "For saying this, you may go. The demon has gone out of your daughter." When the woman went home, she found the child lying in bed and the demon gone.*

Jesus says: *"But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your heavenly Father, for he makes his sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust"* (Mt 5,44-45). Loving means doing all the good that is in our possibilities. A foreign woman is presented to Jesus. Might Jesus ever do her the good she asked him to do? If he did not listen to her request, Jesus would certainly contradict himself. He would say one thing by doing another. The woman puts him at ease. She suggests him that he can make the grace for her, because she takes nothing away from his children and takes nothing away from strangers. A landlord who lets dogs feed on the crumbs that fall from his table takes nothing away from his children. Thus also Jesus, if he lets a single crumb fall so that her daughter may be healed, he takes nothing away from his children and does not even become disobedient to his Father. Here is the true purpose of this woman's prayer: showing every man that Jesus does what he says, what he commands others, he lives it. Jesus is really, truly the mercy of God on our earth. Everyone can turn to Jesus. He always has crumbs of omnipotence, mercy, charity, compassion, hope and light with which he will give our life fullness of truth. He is the compassionate God who loves every man.

Mother of God, Angels and Saints, help us to always manifest the truth of Christ Jesus.

**The kingdom of God is at hand for you**

**FRIDAY 14 FEBRUARY (Lk 10,1-9)**

Here is the mission that the Body of Christ, in each of its members, according to his particular responsibilities, will have to accomplish: saying, announcing and revealing to every man that the kingdom of God is near, inviting to enter into it. The preaching of the kingdom and the invitation to all men to enter into it is the command of Jesus and his true commandment: *“And he said to them, "Thus it is written that the Messiah would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day and that repentance, for the forgiveness of sins, would be preached in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things”* (Lk 24,46-48). *“Then Jesus approached and said to them, "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age"”* (Mt 28,18-20). *"He said to them, "Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned. These signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will drive out demons, they will speak new languages. They will pick up serpents (with their hands), and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not harm them. They will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover." So then the Lord Jesus, after he spoke to them, was taken up into heaven and took his seat at the right hand of God. But they went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word through accompanying signs”* (Mk 16,15-20).

The Apostles of the Lord are responsible for the evangelizing mission and for baptism, for the invitation to conversion and to make disciples of all men of all peoples: *“(Jesus) said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained" ”* (Jn 20,21-23). If they do not preach the kingdom and do not invite people to let themselves be baptized, they do not enter the kingdom of God: *"Jesus answered and said to him, "Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." Nicodemus said to him, "How can a person once grown old be born again? Surely he cannot reenter his mother's womb and be born again, can he?" Jesus answered, "Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of flesh is flesh and what is born of spirit is spirit. Do not be amazed that I told you, 'You must be born from above.' The wind blows where it wills, and you can hear the sound it makes, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes; so it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit"”* (Jn 3,3-8). Every single man might renounce to accept Jesus Christ. He will assume its eternal consequences. However, the commandment must always be observed. The mission is not an advice. It is a command. The Apostles exist for preaching, for evangelization, for baptizing and forming the body of Christ.

*After this the Lord appointed seventy (-two) others whom he sent ahead of him in pairs to every town and place he intended to visit. He said to them, "The harvest is abundant but the labourers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out labourers for his harvest. Go on your way; behold, I am sending you like lambs among wolves. Carry no money bag, no sack, no sandals; and greet no one along the way. Into whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this household.' If a peaceful person lives there, your peace will rest on him; but if not, it will return to you. Stay in the same house and eat and drink what is offered to you, for the labourer deserves his payment. Do not move about from one house to another. Whatever town you enter and they welcome you, eat what is set before you, cure the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God is at hand for you.'*

Today this command is declared invalid due to human respect. Affirming these things is true idolatry. Man has taken the place of God, of Christ Jesus and of the Holy Spirit. Respect for man is in truth and in charity, it is never in falsehood and lies. What respect might there be for a man if he is left to end up in eternal perdition? The rich villain from hell does not think the way Christians think today.

Mother of God, Angels and Saints ensure that our thoughts are from the truth of Christ Jesus.

**My heart is moved with pity for the crowd**

**SATURDAY 15 FEBRUARY (Mk 8,1-10)**

God's compassion is divine charity and truth offered to man so that he may be converted and live. It is the infinite patience of the heavenly Father who awaits the return of the son of his house. Not only does the Lord our God await our repentance, He also gives us the gift of all grace so that we can return to Him. Thus the Book of Wisdom: *“For with you great strength abides always; who can resist the might of your arm? Indeed, before you the whole universe is as a grain from a balance, or a drop of morning dew come down upon the earth. But you have mercy on all, because you can do all things; and you overlook the sins of men that they may repent. For you love all things that are and loathe nothing that you have made; for what you hated, you would not have fashioned. And how could a thing remain, unless you willed it; or be preserved, had it not been called forth by you? But you spare all things, because they are yours, O Lord and lover of souls”* (Wis 11,21-26). God does not want the death of the sinner, but that he is converted and lives.

The Letter to the Hebrews reveals that the compassion of Christ Jesus is just, true and holy. For compassion Jesus gives all of himself to the Father for our conversion, justification and eternal life: *“Every high priest is taken from among men and made their representative before God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He is able to deal patiently with the ignorant and erring, for he himself is beset by weakness and so, for this reason, must make sin offerings for himself as well as for the people. No one takes this honor upon himself but only when called by God, just as Aaron was. In the same way, it was not Christ who glorified himself in becoming high priest, but rather the one who said to him: "You are my son; this day I have begotten you"; just as he says in another place: "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek." In the days when he was in the flesh, he offered prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered; and when he was made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, declared by God high priest according to the order of Melchizedek”* (Heb 5,1-10). The right compassion is in the gift of Christ Jesus. But it is also in the gift of man to Christ Jesus. If a man does not give himself to Christ, in conversion and faith to the Gospel, in obedience to the Word, the compassion of Jesus is made vain.

*In those days when there again was a great crowd without anything to eat, he summoned the disciples and said, "My heart is moved with pity for the crowd, because they have been with me now for three days and have nothing to eat. If I send them away hungry to their homes, they will collapse on the way, and some of them have come a great distance." His disciples answered him, "Where can anyone get enough bread to satisfy them here in this deserted place?" Still he asked them, "How many loaves do you have?" "Seven," they replied. He ordered the crowd to sit down on the ground. Then, taking the seven loaves he gave thanks, broke them, and gave them to his disciples to distribute, and they distributed them to the crowd. They also had a few fish. He said the blessing over them and ordered them distributed also. They ate and were satisfied. They picked up the fragments left over - seven baskets. There were about four thousand people. He dismissed them and got into the boat with his disciples and came to the region of Dalmanutha.*

Today there are many preachers of a vain, unjust, heretical and sinful compassion. That the world can live of false compassion, belongs to its un sanctified nature and not led by the Holy Spirit in the fullness of truth. No false compassion is allowed to the disciple of Jesus. He is the body of Christ and like Christ he must offer himself to the Father for the conversion of his brothers. It is the brother's obligation to redeem and ransom his brother from every falsehood and lie and from every slavery of sin. The Christian's just compassion is in the preaching of the Gospel of salvation, in the invitation to conversion and to faith. It is also in the gift of grace and eternal life. Either the disciple of Jesus lives and manifests the compassion of God and of Christ the Lord, or his compassion is false. He does not save himself and does not save the world.

Mother of God, Angels and Saints make us disciples with the just compassion of Christ Jesus.

**You will not enter into the kingdom of heaven**

**SUNDAY 16 FEBRUARY (Mt 5,17-37)**

Speaking from the Gospel and speaking without the Gospel is not the same thing. Before saying a word, Jesus put it in the fire first. If it resisted fire, he uttered it. If fire consumed it, He did not say it, did not utter it and did not teach it. The Word of Christ Jesus is the true Word of God: "The way of God is perfect, the word of the Lord is purified in fire; he is a shield for those who take refuge in him" (Ps. 18 (17) 31). Today he tells his disciples: "If your justice does not exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven." Ancient justice was that based on the Word of God given to the Fathers. That justice now no longer saves. We need to move on to the new justice that is born of the new Word of the Gospel. Today the Gospel is the Word of justice that opens the doors of the kingdom of God. If the justice of the ancient Word of God is to be passed, much more must be passed the justice that comes from the word of men. The justice that comes from religions, from sciences, from philosophy, from the theology itself, from every mysticism and from every asceticism must also be always passed by obedience to the Word of Christ Jesus, according to all the truth to which the Holy Spirit leads. This Word of Jesus always obliges every man of every time.

*"Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. Amen, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter will pass from the law, until all things have taken place. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever obeys and teaches these commandments will be called greatest in the kingdom of heaven. I tell you, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter into the kingdom of heaven. "You have heard that it was said to your ancestors, 'You shall not kill; and whoever kills will be liable to judgment.' But I say to you, whoever is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment, and whoever says to his brother, 'Raqa,' will be answerable to the Sanhedrin, and whoever says, 'You fool,' will be liable to fiery Gehenna. Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift.*

*Settle with your opponent quickly while on the way to court with him. Otherwise your opponent will hand you over to the judge, and the judge will hand you over to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. Amen, I say to you, you will not be released until you have paid the last penny. "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you, everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one of your members than to have your whole body thrown into Gehenna. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one of your members than to have your whole body go into Gehenna. "It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife must give her a bill of divorce.' But I say to you, whoever divorces his wife (unless the marriage is unlawful) causes her to commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery. "Again you have heard that it was said to your ancestors, 'Do not take a false oath, but make good to the Lord all that you vow.' But I say to you, do not swear at all; not by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Do not swear by your head, for you cannot make a single hair white or black. Let your 'Yes' mean 'Yes,' and your 'No' mean 'No.' Anything more is from the evil one.*

That men can each follow the justice that comes from his own conscience - the risk of suffocating the truth in injustice is real, as Saint Paul teaches us - is a fact. That the disciple of Jesus declares all righteousness for the kingdom away, even that which comes from the word of men and even from the suffocation of the truth in injustice, is true betrayal and denial of the Word of Jesus. Jesus is declared a man of other times, an outdated Person from the past. But even the Gospel is immediately declared a Book of a far away age, a Book of prehistory of religion. But the Christian is a Christian if he remains faithful to the Word of Jesus. He abandons the Word of his Master and he is no longer his disciple. Today we are no longer disciples of Christ the Lord, because we do not walk according to his Word. Everyone follows the words of his heart.

Mother of God, Angels and Saints, make us true disciples of the Word of the Crucified Lord.

**No sign will be given to this generation**

**MONDAY 17 FEBRUARY (Mk 8,11-13)**

The Psalm reveals that, although the Lord gave signs of salvation, liberation, mercy and great love, the people always remained obstinate in its rebellion: *“Our* [*fathers*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=01) *in* [*Egypt*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=04714) *did not* [*understand*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=07919) *Your* [*wonders*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=06381)*; They did not* [*remember*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02142) *Your* [*abundant*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=07230)[*kindnesses*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02617)*, But* [*rebelled*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=04784) *by the* [*sea*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03220)*, at the* [*Red*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05488)[*Sea*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03220)*. Nevertheless He* [*saved*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03467) *them for the* [*sake*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=04616) *of His* [*name*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=08034)*, That He might* [*make*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03045) *His* [*power*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=01369)[*known*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03045)*. Thus He* [*rebuked*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=01605) *the* [*Red*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05488)[*Sea*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03220) *and it* [*dried*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02717) *up, And He* [*led*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=01980) *them through the* [*deeps*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=08415)*, as through the* [*wilderness*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=04057)*. So He* [*saved*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03467) *them from the* [*hand*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03027) *of the one who* [*hated*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=08130) *them, And* [*redeemed*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=01350) *them from the* [*hand*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03027) *of the* [*enemy*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=0340)*. The* [*waters*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=04325)[*covered*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03680) *their* [*adversaries*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=06862)*; Not* [*one*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=0259) *of them was* [*left*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03498)*. Then they* [*believed*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=0539) *His* [*words*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=01697)*; They* [*sang*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=07891) *His* [*praise*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=08416)*. They* [*quickly*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=04116)[*forgot*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=07911) *His* [*works*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=04639)*; They did not* [*wait*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02442) *for His* [*counsel*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=06098)*, But* [*craved*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=0183)[*intensely*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=08378) *in the* [*wilderness*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=04057)*, And* [*tempted*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05254)[*God*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=0410) *in the* [*desert*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03452)*. So He* [*gave*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05414) *them their* [*request*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=07596)*, But* [*sent*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=07971) *a* [*wasting*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=07332)[*disease*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=07332) *among them. 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And a* [*fire*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=0784)[*blazed*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=01197) *up in their* [*company*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05712)*; The* [*flame*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03852)[*consumed*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03857) *the* [*wicked*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=07563)*. They* [*made*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=06213) *a* [*calf*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05695) *in* [*Horeb*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02722) *And* [*worshiped*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=07812) *a* [*molten*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=04541)[*image*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=04541)*. Thus they* [*exchanged*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=04171) *their* [*glory*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03519) *For the* [*image*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=08403) *of an* [*ox*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=07794) *that* [*eats*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=0398)[*grass*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=06212)*. They* [*forgot*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=07911)[*God*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=0410) *their* [*Savior*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03467)*, Who had* [*done*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=06213)[*great*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=01419)[*things*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=01419) *in* [*Egypt*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=04714)*,* [*Wonders*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=06381) *in the* [*land*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=0776) *of* [*Ham*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02526) *And* [*awesome*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03372) *things by the* [*Red*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05488)[*Sea*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03220)*. Therefore He* [*said*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=0559) *that He would* [*destroy*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=08045) *them, Had not* [*Moses*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=04872) *His* [*chosen*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=0972) *one* [*stood*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05975) *in the* [*breach*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=06556)[*before*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=06440) *Him, To* [*turn*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=07725)[*away*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=07725) *His* [*wrath*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02534) *from* [*destroying*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=07843) *them. Then they* [*despised*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03988) *the* [*pleasant*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02532)[*land*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=0776)*; They did not* [*believe*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=0539) *in His* [*word*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=01697)” (Cf. Ps 106 (105) 1-48). But the Lord our God never stops showing his mercy.

The love of the Lord never fails. It is an eternal certainty and an immutable divine truth: *“*[*Give*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03034)[*thanks*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03034) *to the* [*Lord*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03068)*, for He is* [*good*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02896)*, For His* [*loving kindness*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02617) *is* [*everlasting*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05769)*.* [*Give*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03034)[*thanks*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03034) *to the* [*God*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=0430) *of* [*gods*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=0430)*, For His* [*loving kindness*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02617) *is* [*everlasting*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05769)*. To Him who* [*made*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=06213) *the* [*heavens*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=08064) *with* [*skill*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=08394)*, For His* [*loving kindness*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02617) *is* [*everlasting*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05769)*; To Him who* [*made*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=06213) *the* [*great*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=01419)[*lights*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=0216)*, For His* [*loving kindness*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02617) *is* [*everlasting*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05769)*: The* [*sun*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=08121) *to* [*rule*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=04475) *by* [*day*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03117)*, For His* [*loving kindness*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02617) *is* [*everlasting*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05769)*, The* [*moon*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03394) *and* [*stars*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03556) *to* [*rule*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=04475) *by* [*night*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03915)*, For His* [*loving kindness*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02617) *is* [*everlasting*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05769)*. To Him who* [*smote*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05221) *the* [*Egyptians*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=04714) *in their* [*firstborn*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=01060)*, For His* [*loving kindness*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02617) *is* [*everlasting*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05769)*, And* [*brought*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03318)[*Israel*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03478) *out from their* [*midst*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=08432)*, For His* [*loving kindness*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02617) *is* [*everlasting*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05769)*, With a* [*strong*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02389)[*hand*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03027) *and an* [*outstretched*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05186)[*arm*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02220)*, For His* [*loving kindness*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02617) *is* [*everlasting*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05769)*. To Him who* [*divided*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=01504) *the* [*Red*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05488)[*Sea*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03220)[*asunder*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=01506)*, For His* [*loving kindness*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02617) *is* [*everlasting*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05769)*, And made* [*Israel*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03478)[*pass*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05674) *through the* [*midst*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=08432) *of it, For His* [*loving kindness*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02617) *is* [*everlasting*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05769)*; But He* [*overthrew*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05287)[*Pharaoh*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=06547) *and his* [*army*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02428) *in the* [*Red*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05488)[*Sea*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03220)*, For His* [*loving kindness*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02617) *is* [*everlasting*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05769)*. To Him who* [*led*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=01980) *His* [*people*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05971) *through the* [*wilderness*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=04057)*, For His* [*loving kindness*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02617) *is* [*everlasting*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05769)*; And* [*gave*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05414) *their* [*land*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=0776) *as a* [*heritage*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05159)*, For His* [*loving kindness*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02617) *is* [*everlasting*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05769)*, Even a* [*heritage*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05159) *to* [*Israel*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03478) *His* [*servant*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05650)*, For His* [*loving kindness*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02617) *is* [*everlasting*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05769)*.* [*Who*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=07945)[*remembered*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02142) *us in our* [*low*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=08216)[*estate*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=08216)*, For His* [*loving kindness*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02617) *is* [*everlasting*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05769)*, And has* [*rescued*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=06561) *us from our* [*adversaries*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=06862)*, For His* [*loving kindness*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02617) *is* [*everlasting*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05769)*; Who* [*gives*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05414)[*food*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03899) *to* [*all*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03605)[*flesh*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=01320)*, For His* [*loving kindness*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02617) *is* [*everlasting*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05769)*.* [*Give*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03034)[*thanks*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03034) *to the* [*God*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=0410) *of* [*heaven*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=08064)*, For His* [*loving kindness*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=02617) *is* [*everlasting*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05769)(Ps 136 (135), 1-26). The signs show how great the love of the Lord is. The rationality of man sees in the signs the omnipotence of God's mercy, but then it is the will that must be converted to the Word. If the heart is of stone, the sign, the test of strength, is useless. But God remains love by eternal nature.

Why does Jesus leave them, get on the boat and leave for the other shore? He leaves them because the Pharisees did not come to believe, but not to believe in Him. They want a sign so that they can take root in their unbelief. All the works of Jesus are a sign of love for their conversion. But their mind is blind and their heart is of stone. There is no sign that might move them. Whatever signs he had given, they would have refused it. He gave the great sign of his resurrection. To deny it they have corrupted the soldiers so that they attested the false. For love Jesus refuses to give the sign. He will give it to them later.

Mother of God, Angels and Saints ensure that we never put Jesus, the Holy One of God, to the test.

**Guard against the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod**

**TUESDAY 18 FEBRUARY (Mk 8,14-21)**

When the yeast is put into the dough, it is all fermented. Different types of yeast reign in the community: falsehood, pride and foolishness. One of them is extremely dangerous. It is the leaven of immorality. It must be immediately removed from the community: *"It is widely reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of a kind not found even among pagans - a man living with his father's wife. And you are inflated with pride. Should you not rather have been sorrowful? The one who did this deed should be expelled from your midst. I, for my part, although absent in body but present in spirit, have already, as if present, pronounced judgment on the one who has committed this deed, in the name of (our) Lord Jesus: when you have gathered together and I am with you in spirit with the power of the Lord Jesus, you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord. Your boasting is not appropriate. Do you not know that a little yeast leavens all the dough? Clear out the old yeast, so that you may become a fresh batch of dough, inasmuch as you are unleavened. For our paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed. Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people, not at all referring to the immoral of this world or the greedy and robbers or idolaters; for you would then have to leave the world. But I now write to you not to associate with anyone named a brother, if he is immoral, greedy, an idolater, a slanderer, a drunkard, or a robber, not even to eat with such a person. For why should I be judging outsiders? Is it not your business to judge those within? God will judge those outside. "Purge the evil person from your midst"* (1Cor 5,1-13). If immorality remains in it, all the dough could become immoral tomorrow. Immorality multiplies and conquers hearts.

Jesus wants his disciples to watch out, stay away from the leaven of the Pharisees and from the leaven of Herod. That of the Pharisees is a leaven of religion with the precepts of men who replace the Lord's Commandments. That of Herod is the leaven of concupiscence, foolishness, immorality and debauchery: *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites. You lock the kingdom of heaven before human beings. You do not enter yourselves, nor do you allow entrance to those trying to enter. "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites. You traverse sea and land to make one convert, and when that happens you make him a child of Gehenna twice as much as yourselves. "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites. You pay tithes of mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier things of the law: judgment and mercy and fidelity. (But) these you should have done, without neglecting the others. Blind guides, who strain out the gnat and swallow the camel! "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites. You cleanse the outside of cup and dish, but inside they are full of plunder and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee, cleanse first the inside of the cup, so that the outside also may be clean”* (Cf. Mt 23,1-39). If ancient justice is to be overcome, infinitely more we must stay away from this religion of great immorality, falsehood, blindness, injustice and denial of God.

*They had forgotten to bring bread, and they had only one loaf with them in the boat. He enjoined them, "Watch out, guard against the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod." They concluded among themselves that it was because they had no bread. When he became aware of this he said to them, "Why do you conclude that it is because you have no bread? Do you not yet understand or comprehend? Are your hearts hardened? Do you have eyes and not see, ears and not hear? And do you not remember, when I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many wicker baskets full of fragments you picked up?" They answered him, "Twelve." "When I broke the seven loaves for the four thousand, how many full baskets of fragments did you pick up?" They answered (him), "Seven." He said to them, "Do you still not understand?"*

Today there is an even more dangerous and intrusive yeast from which we must watch ourselves. It is the leaven of universal religion, of universal brotherhood; however built on the denial of Christ the Lord and the betrayal of his Gospel. This leaven builds the religion of sin and hell, not the religion of salvation and eternal life.

Mother of God, Angels and Saints, make us move away from every leaven that denies Christ Jesus.

**I see people looking like trees and walking**

**WEDNESDAY 19 FEBRUARY (Mk 8,22-26)**

The Lord gave his first sight to man through the Commandments, the Law of the Covenant: *"I, the Lord, am your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, that place of slavery. You shall not have other gods besides me. You shall not carve idols for yourselves in the shape of anything in the sky above or on the earth below or in the waters beneath the earth; you shall not bow down before them or worship them. For I, the Lord, your God, am a jealous God, inflicting punishment for their fathers' wickedness on the children of those who hate me, down to the third and fourth generation; but bestowing mercy down to the thousandth generation, on the children of those who love me and keep my commandments. "You shall not take the name of the Lord, your God, in vain. For the Lord will not leave unpunished him who takes his name in vain. "Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day. Six days you may labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord, your God. No work may be done then either by you, or your son or daughter, or your male or female slave, or your beast, or by the alien who lives with you. In six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them; but on the seventh day he rested. That is why the Lord has blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. "Honor your father and your mother, that you may have a long life in the land which the Lord, your God, is giving you. "You shall not kill. "You shall not commit adultery. "You shall not steal. "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. "You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male or female slave, nor his ox or ass, nor anything else that belongs to him"”* (Ex 20,1-7). Pharisees, scribes, Sadducees and chief priests are blind and blind leaders, because they lack this fundamental view. This also applies to the disciples of Jesus. Without this fundamental view, we are blind. That today we are blind not only our non-vision of Christ and his Gospel attests to it, much more so does our non-vision of the objective moral Law which must necessarily guide man. Today the disciple of Jesus is blind in a world of blind, he thinks like the blind, he speaks like the blind and acts from his great blindness.

*When they arrived at Bethsaida, they brought to him a blind man and begged him to touch him. He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village. Putting spittle on his eyes he laid his hands on him and asked, "Do you see anything?" Looking up he replied, "I see people looking like trees and walking." Then he laid hands on his eyes a second time and he saw clearly; his sight was restored and he could see everything distinctly. Then he sent him home and said, "Do not even go into the village."*

Without the return to the Law of the Lord, the second healing might not be given. The second healing is the gift of the Holy Spirit that becomes our eyes, our ears, our heart, our intelligence, our will, our desire, our strength and our light. One must always grow and walk in the light of the Spirit, otherwise he returns to the blindness of the flesh. Thus St. Paul: *“I say, then: live by the Spirit and you will certainly not gratify the desire of the flesh. For the flesh has desires against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; these are opposed to each other, so that you may not do what you want. But if you are guided by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are obvious: immorality, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, rivalry, jealousy, outbursts of fury, acts of selfishness, dissensions, factions, occasions of envy, drinking bouts, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. In contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ (Jesus) have crucified their flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also follow the Spirit. Let us not be conceited, provoking one another, envious of one another”* (Gal 5,16-26). Today, many Christians are not even like walking trees. They are in total blindness.

Mother of God, Angels and Saints, help us to walk towards the whole truth in the Spirit.

**Get behind me, Satan**

**THURSDAY 20 FEBRUARY (Mk 8,27-33)**

Saint Paul warns us: Satan also disguises himself as an angel of light for the ruin of believers in Christ Jesus: *“If only you would put up with a little foolishness from me! Please put up with me. For I am jealous of you with the jealousy of God, since I betrothed you to one husband to present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts may be corrupted from a sincere (and pure) commitment to Christ. For if someone comes and preaches another Jesus than the one we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it well enough. For I think that I am not in any way inferior to these "super apostles." Even if I am untrained in speaking, I am not so in knowledge; in every way we have made this plain to you in all things. Did I make a mistake when I humbled myself so that you might be exalted, because I preached the gospel of God to you without charge? I plundered other churches by accepting from them in order to minister to you. And when I was with you and in need, I did not burden anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied my needs. So I refrained and will refrain from burdening you in any way. By the truth of Christ in me, this boast of mine shall not be silenced in the regions of Achaia. And why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do! And what I do I will continue to do, in order to end this pretext of those who seek a pretext for being regarded as we are in the mission of which they boast. For such people are false apostles, deceitful workers, who masquerade as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan masquerades as an angel of light. So it is not strange that his ministers also masquerade as ministers of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds”* (2Cor 11,1-15). To know Satan one must know God. Whoever does not know God does not know Satan. He worships Satan thinking of worshiping God. He knows the falsehoods of Satan who knows the truths of God and his will. Whoever does not know the Word of God and his will, might never know the words of Satan and his will. He falls into temptation. He follows Satan thinking he is following God. Today the Gospel, Scripture, Tradition, the Magisterium and the great Theology of two thousand years of history were left, with what results? Not knowing either God or Christ anymore, we are turning into worshipers of Satan.

*Now Jesus and his disciples set out for the villages of Caesarea Philippi. Along the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" They said in reply, "John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others one of the prophets." And he asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter said to him in reply, "You are the Messiah." Then he warned them not to tell anyone about him. He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer greatly and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and rise after three days. He spoke this openly. Then Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. At this he turned around and, looking at his disciples, rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do."*

Peter does not know the Scriptures on the Christ of God. Jesus knows every Word of the Father delivered in the Sacred Scrolls of the Law, of the Prophets and of the Psalms. He speaks of himself from these Sacred Scrolls. Peter scolds him. Jesus is talking about a false Messiah. Jesus with great strength tells him to remain a disciple, calling him Satan. No one might be Master of Jesus and no one will have to tell him what to do or not do, how to talk and how not to talk. Master of Jesus is only the Father that speaks to him in the Holy Spirit. Every day, even the Christian is tempted by the thousand Satans who are beside him. It is up to the tempted person to reject any temptation. How might he reject it? If he also knows the Scriptures, he walks in the light of the Holy Spirit and knows what the will of the Father about his life is. Today Satan is dressing as an angel of mercy, acceptance, respect for sin, connivance with evil and its justification and approval of every immorality. The Christian is blind and does not see Satan tempting him.

Mother of God, Angels and Saints, help us to always see the angel of darkness.

**FEBRUARY 2020**

***THIRD DECADE OF FEBRUARY***

**Whoever is ashamed of me and of my words**

**FRIDAY 21 FEBRUARY (Mk 8,34-9,1)**

Beyond all the theological, philosophical, anthropological, psychological and religious speculations of any other origin coming from the sky, from the earth and or from the underworld, a truth must be clearly highlighted: the Christian has stipulated a covenant, a real contract with Christ Jesus. This is a contract in which no change or modification might be made. Here are the terms of the contract: You, man, on earth, while you stand in time, you will also let yourself be crucified to do my will. I, Jesus, will give you eternal life today and tomorrow, when you come into eternity, I will welcome you into my house of glory, joy, peace and endless bliss. But if you, man, will deny the contract that will be sealed with my blood, you will have no place with me in my paradise. Jesus never deceived anyone. He never said one thing for another. His contract is public, before all the Angels of heaven, his Father and the Holy Spirit. Whoever observes the contract in every code to be observed will have the joy of being with him. Whoever does not respect it he might not enjoy this bliss. It is only in compliance with the contract.

The first code of this contract wants us not to be ashamed of him before men. It wants Christ Jesus to be confessed and recognized in his divine and human truth, for heaven and for earth, for time and for eternity. Without this public confession, before the whole world, of the truth of Christ, the contract is not observed and not even He will recognize us as belonging to him before his Father and the Angels of God. This is the reason that drives Saint Paul to exhort his disciple Timothy not to be ashamed of the Gospel: *“For this reason, I remind you to stir into flame the gift of God that you have through the imposition of my hands. For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice but rather of power and love and self-control. So do not be ashamed of your testimony to our Lord, nor of me, a prisoner for his sake; but bear your share of hardship for the gospel with the strength that comes from God. He saved us and called us to a holy life, not according to our works but according to his own design and the grace bestowed on us in Christ Jesus before time began, but now made manifest through the appearance of our savior Christ Jesus, who destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, for which I was appointed preacher and apostle and teacher. On this account I am suffering these things; but I am not ashamed, for I know him in whom I have believed and am confident that he is able to guard what has been entrusted to me until that day. Take as your norm the sound words that you heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Guard this rich trust with the help of the holy Spirit that dwells within us. You know that everyone in Asia deserted me, including Phygelus and Hermogenes. May the Lord grant mercy to the family of Onesiphorus because he often gave me new heart and was not ashamed of my chains. But when he came to Rome, he promptly searched for me and found me. May the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord on that day. And you know very well the services he rendered in Ephesus”* (2Tm 1,6-18). The pact always and at all times obliges.

*He summoned the crowd with his disciples and said to them, "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and that of the gospel will save it. What profit is there for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? What could one give in exchange for his life? Whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this faithless and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels." He also said to them, "Amen, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see that the kingdom of God has come in power."*

Obedience to every other command of Christ Jesus, to each of his Words is an essential part of the contract. Whoever accepts and signs the contract cannot transgress it by saying or teaching that he will still have the goods contained in it. The contract can be exited, but the promised assets are also exited. We will not be welcomed in his bliss.

Mother of God, Angels and Saints ensure that the Christian believes in the contract he has signed.

**The gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it**

 **SATURDAY 22 FEBRUARY (Mt 16,13-19)**

Thus St. Paul speaks of the Church, writing to Timothy: *“I am writing you about these matters, although I hope to visit you soon. But if I should be delayed, you should know how to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of truth. Undeniably great is the mystery of devotion, Who was manifested in the flesh, vindicated in the spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed to the Gentiles, believed in throughout the world, taken up in glory”* (1Tm 3,14-16). The truth of the Church is Christ Jesus and the mission of the Church is to form the body of Christ Jesus in history. But which church is the pillar and support of the truth? Here is this church according to St. Paul: *“I, then, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to live in a manner worthy of the call you have received, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love, striving to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace: one body and one Spirit, as you were also called to the one hope of your call; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.* The Church that is the support and pillar of truth is the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church, because it is in this Church that the fullness of grace and truth subsists. All other churches lack the fullness of grace or truth.

This one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church lives unity in the communion of the many charismas and of the many missions given by the Holy Spirit: *“But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore, it says: "He ascended on high and took prisoners captive; he gave gifts to men." What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended into the lower (regions) of the earth? The one who descended is also the one who ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things. And he gave some as apostles, others as prophets, others as evangelists, others as pastors and teachers, to equip the holy ones for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the extent of the full stature of Christ, so that we may no longer be infants, tossed by waves and swept along by every wind of teaching arising from human trickery, from their cunning in the interests of deceitful scheming. Rather, living the truth in love, we should grow in every way into him who is the head, Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, with the proper functioning of each part, brings about the body's growth and builds itself up in love”* (Cf. Eph 4,1-16). The powers of the underworld will never prevail against this Church, because in it the Holy Spirit acts and always intervenes through mysterious ways and brings back the boat guided by Peter into the waters of truth and grace and of full obedience to the Gospel.

*When Jesus went into the region of Caesarea Philippi he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter said in reply, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Jesus said to him in reply, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood* *has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father. And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."*

There have always been moments of great turbulence, storm and tempest for this Church. There will always be some of these moments. Today is one of these moments. The storm of falsehood, indifferentism, reduction of the supernatural and transcendence to pure natural and immanence, of immorality and idolatry, of the complete abandonment of Christ Jesus and of grace to deliver the personal life to sin and the denial of the Gospel, seems to want to conquer all hearts. But even this storm is allowed by the Lord in order to prove the hearts of his faithful. Whoever lets himself be carried away by the storm does not love God, does not love Christ, does not love the Holy Spirit, does not love the Gospel, does not love the truth and does not love grace. He has left the path to heaven.

Mother of God, Angels and Saints arrange that the Christians repent and return to Christ Jesus.

**Do not the tax collectors do the same?**

**SUNDAY 23 FEBRUARY (Mt 5, 38-48)**

The disciple of Jesus is called to distinguish himself from every other man in faith, in charity, in hope and in every other virtue. Saint Paul dictates these rules to the Thessalonians: “*Finally, brothers, we earnestly ask and exhort you in the Lord Jesus that, as you received from us how you should conduct yourselves to please God - and as you are conducting yourselves - you do so even more. For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. This is the will of God, your holiness: that you refrain from immorality, that each of you know how to acquire a wife for himself in holiness and honor, not in lustful passion as do the Gentiles who do not know God; not to take advantage of or exploit a brother in this matter, for the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you before and solemnly affirmed. For God did not call us to impurity but to holiness. Therefore, whoever disregards this, disregards not a human being but God, who (also) gives his holy Spirit to you. On the subject of mutual charity you have no need for anyone to write you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another. Indeed, you do this for all the brothers throughout Macedonia. Nevertheless we urge you, brothers, to progress even more, and to aspire to live a tranquil life, to mind your own affairs, and to work with your (own) hands, as we instructed you, that you may conduct yourselves properly toward outsiders and not depend on anyone”* (1Ts 4,1-12). The distinction is the truth of the Christian. A disciple of Jesus who does not distinguish himself is not his disciple.

Even for the Apostle John the distinction is the truth of essence: *“Children, let no one deceive you. The person who acts in righteousness is righteous, just as he is righteous. Whoever sins belongs to the devil, because the devil has sinned from the beginning. Indeed, the Son of God was revealed to destroy the works of the devil. No one who is begotten by God commits sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot sin because he is begotten by God. In this way, the children of God and the children of the devil are made plain; no one who fails to act in righteousness belongs to God, nor anyone who does not love his brother (1Jn 3,7-10). “Beloved, do not trust every spirit but test the spirits to see whether they belong to God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. This is how you can know the Spirit of God: every spirit that acknowledges Jesus Christ come in the flesh be longs to God, and every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus does not belong to God. This is the spirit of the antichrist that, as you heard, is to come, but in fact is already in the world. You belong to God, children, and you have conquered them, for the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. They belong to the world; accordingly, their teaching belongs to the world, and the world listens to them. We belong to God, and anyone who knows God listens to us, while anyone who does not belong to God refuses to hear us. This is how we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of deceit”* (Jn 4,1-6). Whoever does not distinguish himself and does not distinguish is a false disciple.

*"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, offer no resistance to one who is evil. When someone strikes you on (your) right cheek, turn the other one to him as well. If anyone wants to go to law with you over your tunic, hand him your cloak as well. Should anyone press you into service for one mile, go with him for two miles. Give to the one who asks of you, and do not turn your back on one who wants to borrow. "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your heavenly Father, for he makes his sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what recompense will you have? Do not the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brothers only, what is unusual about that? Do not the pagans do the same? So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus asks for a very high distinction in love. His disciples must not know evil against any person. But they must also always practice love for everyone. But everything must be rigorous obedience to his Law, to his Gospel and to his truth. If it is easy not to do evil, it is difficult to do good, since the Holy Spirit assigns everyone a good to be done.

Mother of God, Angels and Saints arrange that every Christian does the good commanded to him.

**Only come out through prayer**

**MONDAY 24 FEBRUARY (Mk 9,14-29)**

What Jesus left us in the Garden of Olives is an example of how Satan is defeated with prayer. But already in the Upper Room the Lord had revealed to Simon that Satan had sought them out to sift them like wheat and that he had prayed so that his faith did not fail. That of the Master was such an intense prayer so as to turn sweat into drops of blood: *"Simon, Simon, behold Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat, but I have prayed that your own faith may not fail; and once you have turned back, you must strengthen your brothers." He said to him, "Lord, I am prepared to go to prison and to die with you." But he replied, "I tell you, Peter, before the cock crows this day, you will deny three times that you know me." Then going out he went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him. When he arrived at the place he said to them, "Pray that you may not undergo the test." After withdrawing about a stone's throw from them and kneeling, he prayed, saying, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me; still, not my will but yours be done." (And to strengthen him an angel from heaven appeared to him. He was in such agony and he prayed so fervently that his sweat became like drops of blood falling on the ground.) When he rose from prayer and returned to his disciples, he found them sleeping from grief. He said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not undergo the test"* *”* (Cf. Lk 22,31-46). The diabolical possession is not so much the physical one, as that of the mind, the heart, the will, the feelings, the soul and the spirit. To win this possession, all the grace of Christ Jesus and all the power of the Holy Spirit are needed. Whoever wants to dominate Satan must walk with all the strength and wisdom of the Holy Spirit. With wisdom he sees him, with the fortitude he beats him.

*When they came to the disciples, they saw a large crowd around them and scribes arguing with them. Immediately on seeing him, the whole crowd was utterly amazed. They ran up to him and greeted him. He asked them, "What are you arguing about with them?" Someone from the crowd answered him, "Teacher, I have brought to you my son possessed by a mute spirit. Wherever it seizes him, it throws him down; he foams at the mouth, grinds his teeth, and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive it out, but they were unable to do so." He said to them in reply, "O faithless generation, how long will I be with you? How long will I endure you? Bring him to me." They brought the boy to him. And when he saw him, the spirit immediately threw the boy into convulsions. As he fell to the ground, he began to roll around and foam at the mouth.*

*Then he questioned his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" He replied, "Since childhood. It has often thrown him into fire and into water to kill him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us." Jesus said to him, " 'If you can!' Everything is possible to one who has faith." Then the boy's father cried out, "I do believe, help my unbelief!" Jesus, on seeing a crowd rapidly gathering, rebuked the unclean spirit and said to it, "Mute and deaf spirit, I command you: come out of him and never enter him again!" Shouting and throwing the boy into convulsions, it came out. He became like a corpse, which caused many to say, "He is dead!" But Jesus took him by the hand, raised him, and he stood up. When he entered the house, his disciples asked him in private, "Why could we not drive it out?" He said to them, "This kind can only come out through prayer."*

The Apostle Peter adds to prayer the virtues of faith, humility, vigilance and sobriety, with which soul, body and spirit are always preserved in the divine will: *“Likewise, you younger members, be subject to the presbyters. And all of you, clothe yourselves with humility in your dealings with one another, for: "God opposes the proud but bestows favor on the humble." So humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time. Cast all your worries upon him because he cares for you. Be sober and vigilant. Your opponent the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion looking for (someone) to devour. Resist him, steadfast in faith, knowing that your fellow believers throughout the world undergo the same sufferings. The God of all grace who called you to his eternal glory through Christ (Jesus) will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you after you have suffered a little. To him be dominion forever. Amen.”* (1Pt 5,5-11). Unclean spirits are winnable, provided that the weapons laid by Christ Jesus are used in our service.

Mother of God, Angels and Saints arrange that we never strip of the spiritual armour.

**If anyone wishes to be first**

**TUESDAY 25 FEBRUARY (Mk 9,30-37)**

Ambition, the search for the first place, the desire for leadership can destroy an entire community. A single proud is enough and God's field is in ruins. The ambitious man does more damage in the good grain of the Lord than the three hundred foxes of Samson: *“After some time, in the season of the wheat harvest, Samson visited his wife, bringing a kid. But when he said, "Let me be with my wife in private," her father would not let him enter, saying, "I thought it certain you wished to repudiate her; so I gave her to your best man. Her younger sister is more beautiful than she; you may have her instead." Samson said to them, "This time the Philistines cannot blame me if I harm them." So Samson left and caught three hundred foxes. Turning them tail to tail, he tied between each pair of tails one of the torches he had at hand. He then kindled the torches and set the foxes loose in the standing grain of the Philistines, thus burning both the shocks and the standing grain, and the vineyards and olive orchards as well. When the Philistines asked who had done this, they were told, "Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite, because his wife was taken and given to his best man." So the Philistines went up and destroyed her and her family by fire. Samson said to them, "If this is how you act, I will not stop until I have taken revenge on you" ”* (Jdg. 15,1-7).

Three hundred foxes set fire to a wheat field ready for harvest. An ambitious sets fire to a community, making it live badly. In his Third Letter the Apostle John publicly denounces the ambitious Diòtrephes: *“Beloved, you are faithful in all you do for the brothers, especially for strangers; they have testified to your love before the church. Please help them in a way worthy of God to continue their journey. For they have set out for the sake of the Name and are accepting nothing from the pagans. Therefore, we ought to support such persons, so that we may be co-workers in the truth. I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to dominate, does not acknowledge us. Therefore, if I come, I will draw attention to what he is doing, spreading evil nonsense about us. And not content with that, he will not receive the brothers, hindering those who wish to do so and expelling them from the church. Beloved, do not imitate evil but imitate good. Whoever does what is good is of God; whoever does what is evil has never seen God”* (3Jn 5-11). Before the descent of the Holy Spirit into the community of the Apostles discussions often arose about which of them was the greatest. Pride is the breath that Satan gives to those he wants to conquer. But always the breath of pride is transformed into fire that burns, blazes and consumes the good grain of God.

*They left from there and began a journey through Galilee, but he did not wish anyone to know about it. He was teaching his disciples and telling them, "The Son of Man is to be handed over to men and they will kill him, and three days after his death he will rise." But they did not understand the saying, and they were afraid to question him. They came to Capernaum and, once inside the house, he began to ask them, "What were you arguing about on the way?" But they remained silent. They had been discussing among themselves on the way who was the greatest. Then he sat down, called the Twelve, and said to them, "If anyone wishes to be first, he shall be the last of all and the servant of all." Taking a child he placed it in their midst, and putting his arms around it he said to them, "Whoever receives one child such as this in my name, receives me; and whoever receives me, receives not me but the one who sent me."*

Pride is overcome if our eyes are always fixed on Jesus Crucified, in contemplation of his humility. Thus the Letter to the Hebrews: *“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”* (Heb 12,1-3). Only the perennial contemplation of Christ Crucified is a very powerful antidote against every breath of Satan in our hearts.

Mother of God, Angels and Saints give us the joy of contemplating Christ Jesus Crucified.

**Do not blow a trumpet before you**

**ASH WEDNESDAY 26 FEBRUARY (Mt 6,1-6.16-18)**

The Masters of the Spirit not only teach virtues, but also the ways in which every virtue must be practiced, exercised and lived. Saint Paul is a great Master of the truth and love of Christ, but also of the ways in which truth and charity are to be practiced: *“For by the grace given to me I tell everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than one ought to think, but to think soberly, each according to the measure of faith that God has apportioned. For as in one body we have many parts, and all the parts do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ and individually parts of one another. Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us exercise them: if prophecy, in proportion to the faith; if ministry, in ministering; if one is a teacher, in teaching; if one exhorts, in exhortation; if one contributes, in generosity; if one is over others, with diligence; if one does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be sincere; hate what is evil, hold on to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; anticipate one another in showing honor. Do not grow slack in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, endure in affliction, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the holy ones, exercise hospitality”* (Cf. Rm 12,1-21). Charity and truths deprived of the divine modalities are diabolical. Satan also spoke the truth about Christ, but for his ruin.

The body of Christ is one, the charismas are many: *“There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit. To one is given through the Spirit the expression of wisdom; to another the expression of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit; to another mighty deeds; to another prophecy; to another discernment of spirits; to another varieties of tongues; to another interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit produces all of these, distributing them individually to each person as he wishes”* (Cf. 1Cor 12,1-31). *“Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, (love) is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things* (Cf. 1Cor 13,1-13). Truth must animate charity, charity must flow from the truth and together they must walk according to divine modalities and forms. Every mode must be in us the fruit of the wisdom of the Spirit.

*"(But) take care not to perform righteous deeds in order that people may see them; otherwise, you will have no recompense from your heavenly Father. When you give alms, do not blow a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets to win the praise of others. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right is doing, so that your almsgiving may be secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you. "When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, who love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on street corners so that others may see them. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you. "When you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites. They neglect their appearance, so that they may appear to others to be fasting. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you may not appear to be fasting, except to your Father who is hidden. And your Father who sees what is hidden will repay you.*

Jesus asks that every good work be done for the Father according to the modality of secrecy. If the work is not made for Him, He neither blesses it nor gives the reward, neither today nor in eternity. Nothing serves a work not rewarded by God. It is vanity.

Mother of God, Angels and Saints, give us the science of the Spirit to do everything well.

**Take up his cross daily and follow me**

**THURSDAY 27 FEBRUARY (Lk 9,22-25)**

The cross that the Christian is called to carry, if he wants to be a disciple of Jesus, is obedience to every Word of God brought to completion by him. Saint Paul wants every disciple to always have before his eyes his Master's obedience until death on the cross. We look at Christ Jesus, we imitate Christ Jesus and we carry the cross: *“Who, 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. So then, my beloved, obedient as you have always been, not only when I am present but all the more now when I am absent, work out your salvation with fear and trembling. For God is the one who, for his good purpose, works in you both to desire and to work. Do everything without grumbling or questioning, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine like lights in the world, as you hold on to the word of life, so that my boast for the day of Christ may be that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. But, even if I am poured out as a libation upon the sacrificial service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with all of you”* (Phil 2,6-17). The Christian is called to free himself from every cross that is born of his personal obedience to sin, in the transgression of the Law of the Lord and to take upon himself the cross which is the fruit of his obedience to the Gospel. These two crosses must never be confused. The former is a cross that leads to eternal death to live an endless cross in hell. Instead the latter is the cross of life, which lasts only until the moment of death. Then it will be transformed into glory and eternal light.

Even the Apostle Peter invites Christians to endure all suffering that comes from their obedience to the Gospel. They must atone for the pain due to their sins. Instead Jesus did not commit any sin. He lived his cross for us: *“For whenever anyone bears the pain of unjust suffering because of consciousness of God, that is a grace. But what credit is there if you are patient when beaten for doing wrong? But if you are patient when you suffer for doing what is good, this is a grace before God. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his footsteps. "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." When he was insulted, he returned no insult; when he suffered, he did not threaten; instead, he handed himself over to the one who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body upon the cross, so that, free from sin, we might live for righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. For you had gone astray like sheep, but you have now returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls”* (1Pt 2,19-25). He enters the glory of Heaven who leaves the cross of obedience to sin and takes upon himself the cross of obedience to the Gospel. The cross must be carried every day.

*He said, "The Son of Man must suffer greatly and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed and on the third day be raised." Then he said to all, "If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. What profit is there for one to gain the whole world yet lose or forfeit himself?*

The temptation leads so that we leave the cross of obedience to the Gospel, convincing believers that in this way the cross might be eliminated. Instead the cross that is born of sin is infinitely heavier than the yoke of Christ the Lord that is light and meek. We overcome temptation only if we follow a serious and demanding journey of asceticism. Without journey from faith to faith, we fall into temptation and go into death.

Mother of God, Angels and Saints, help us to always walk moved by the Holy Spirit.

**The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them**

**FRIDAY 28 FEBRUARY (Mt 9,14-15)**

The Bridegroom who will be taken away is Christ Jesus. Thus John speaks to his disciples: *“Now a dispute arose between the disciples of John and a Jew about ceremonial washings. So they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, the one who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you testified, here he is baptizing and everyone is coming to him." John answered and said, "No one can receive anything except what has been given him from heaven. You yourselves can testify that I said (that) I am not the Messiah, but that I was sent before him. The one who has the bride is the bridegroom; the best man, who stands and listens for him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. So this joy of mine has been made complete. He must increase; I must decrease"* (Jn 3,25-30). Bringing every soul to Christ Jesus is our true apostolate and our true mission. The pastoral care is useless if it does not prepare brides worthy of Christ the Lord. This is why it is urgent to abandon all immanence of sin and bring everything back into transcendence.

Saint Paul reveals what Christ Jesus did for his bride: *"Be subordinate to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives should be subordinate to their husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is head of his wife just as Christ is head of the church, he himself the savior of the body. As the church is subordinate to Christ, so wives should be subordinate to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church and handed himself over for her to sanctify her, cleansing her by the bath of water with the word, that he might present to himself the church in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. So (also) husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one hates his own flesh but rather nourishes and cherishes it, even as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. "For this reason a man shall leave (his) father and (his) mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This is a great mystery, but I speak in reference to Christ and the church. In any case, each one of you should love his wife as himself, and the wife should respect her husband”* (Eph 5,21-33). If Christ washed me in his blood, I must give my blood to him, which is blood of his body, so that he can wash every other man. This is the fast that Jesus asks his disciples: depriving themselves not of food, but of their whole life to make it a gift to Him. He needs it to redeem, save and purify the souls all called to become his mystical spouses, chaste, faithful brides, who offer life to him for the salvation of the world.

With the brides that remain faithful to their gift of love, that is, to the gift of their body sanctified by virtues, Jesus will celebrate the eternal wedding in the Heavenly Jerusalem: *“The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." Let the hearer say, "Come." Let the one who thirsts come forward, and the one who wants it receive the gift of life-giving water. I warn everyone who hears the prophetic words in this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words in this prophetic book, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city described in this book. The one who gives this testimony says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen! Come, Lord Jesus! The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all* (Cf. Rev 22,1-21). Here is the true meaning of Christian fasting: depriving oneself of his life to make a gift of it to Christ.

*Then the disciples of John approached him and said, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast (much), but your disciples do not fast?" Jesus answered them, "Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.*

If the Christian wants to give his body to Christ for the redemption of his brothers, he must be entirely governed by every virtue. For this reason he will also have to deprive himself, free himself of every vice, every sin and every transgression of the Word of the Lord. This abstention from evil must be daily. He must not fast for forty days, but for all the days of his life. If he is faithful to this fast, the gift is perfect.

Mother of God, Angels and Saints, help us to free ourselves from evil to be a gift for Christ.

**I have not come to call the righteous**

**SATURDAY 29 FEBRUARY (Lk 5,17-32)**

The Lord our God spoke through his prophets with great clarity. The right can be reversed. He will die for his sin. The sinner can be converted. He will live for his justice: *“But if the wicked man turns away from all the sins he committed, if he keeps all my statutes and does what is right and just, he shall surely live, he shall not die. None of the crimes he committed shall be remembered against him; he shall live because of the virtue he has practiced. Do I indeed derive any pleasure from the death of the wicked? says the Lord God. Do I not rather rejoice when he turns from his evil way that he may live? And if the virtuous man turns from the path of virtue to do evil, the same kind of abominable things that the wicked man does, can he do this and still live? None of his virtuous deeds shall be remembered, because he has broken faith and committed sin; because of this, he shall die. You say, "The Lord's way is not fair!" Hear now, house of Israel: Is it my way that is unfair, or rather, are not your ways unfair? When a virtuous man turns away from virtue to commit iniquity, and dies, it is because of the iniquity he committed that he must die. But if a wicked man, turning from the wickedness he has committed, does what is right and just, he shall preserve his life; since he has turned away from all the sins which he committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die. And yet the house of Israel says, "The Lord's way is not fair!" Is it my way that is not fair, house of Israel, or rather, is it not that your ways are not fair? Therefore I will judge you, house of Israel, each one according to his ways, says the Lord God. Turn and be converted from all your crimes, that they may be no cause of guilt for you. Cast away from you all the crimes you have committed, and make for yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. Why should you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies, says the Lord God. Return and live!* (Ez 18,21-32). For the Pharisees the just remains always right, even if he breaks all the commandments. The sinner always remains a sinner, even if he observes every Word of God, even in the smallest precepts. The Pharisees had created two prison compartments without any possibility that one could enter the other. Saints forever. Sinners forever.

Here is the Lord again through the mouth of his prophet: *“Answer them: As I live, says the Lord God, I swear I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked man, but rather in the wicked man's conversion, that he may live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! Why should you die, O house of Israel? As for you, son of man, tell your countrymen: The virtue which a man has practiced will not save him on the day that he sins; neither will the wickedness that a man has done bring about his downfall on the day that he turns from his wickedness (nor can the virtuous man, when he sins, remain alive). Though I say to the virtuous man that he shall surely live, if he then presumes on his virtue and does wrong, none of his virtuous deeds shall be remembered; because of the wrong he has done, he shall die. And though I say to the wicked man that he shall surely die, if he turns away from his sin and does what is right and just, giving back pledges, restoring stolen goods, living by the statutes that bring life, and doing no wrong, he shall surely live, he shall not die. None of the sins he committed shall be held against him; he has done what is right and just, he shall surely live”* (Ez 33,10-16). How the righteous can return to injustice, the unjust in justice.

*After this he went out and saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at the customs post. He said to him, "Follow me." And leaving everything behind, he got up and followed him. Then Levi gave a great banquet for him in his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were at table with them. The Pharisees and their scribes complained to his disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" Jesus said to them in reply, "Those who are healthy do not need a physician, but the sick do. I have not come to call the righteous to repentance but sinners."*

The Pharisees are not against Christ, they are against God. Abolishing the Law of the Lord, they have made a second one according to their heart of stone. They are without mercy. Instead, Jesus is entirely of his Father and lives the Law of his God. He came to tell men what the Father has always said: the doors of his heart are always open. It suffices to be converted, repent and change life and he welcomes us into the house of his heart.

Mother of God, Angels and Saints, free us from this heavy leaven of the Pharisees.