**MONDAY JANUARY 17 – SECOND WEEK O.T. [C]**

**“Likewise, no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the skins are ruined. Rather, new wine is poured into fresh wineskins."**

**Jesus has come to bring the most pure obedience to the Word into religion. Since obedience is always new, as the truth contained in the Word is always new, the work of the true faithful in the living and true God, in the unique and only Lord and Creator of man, is always new. However, before bringing the most pure obedience to the Word, Jesus brings the most pure Word of the Father. Proclaimed the most pure Word of the Father, one must give the most pure obedience to it. One must not give obedience to the Word, one must give it to the truth that is contained in the Word. Since the knowledge of the truth is a perennial and never interrupted journey, a journey to fulfil in the Holy Spirit, obedience will always be new. Being it always new, there are no constructions that may imprison it.**

**In the Old Testament, one had reduced the religion to a practice with no obedience to the Word. The prophets rise up against this religion made of exteriority, but not the obedience to the Word, and thus they cry out: “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)**

**Through the prophet Jeremiah, the Lord says to his people that He has never asked for sacrifices and things like that. He has asked for one only thing: the obedience to his Word. Here is the severe admonition of Jeremiah:** “**Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Heap your holocausts upon your sacrifices; eat up the flesh!** **In speaking to your fathers on the day I brought them out of the land of Egypt, I gave them no command concerning holocaust or sacrifice. This rather is what I commanded them: Listen to my voice; then I will be your God and you shall be my people. Walk in all the ways that I command you, so that you may prosper. But they obeyed not, nor did they pay heed. They walked in the hardness of their evil hearts and turned their backs, not their faces, to me. From the day that your fathers left the land of Egypt even to this day, I have sent you untiringly all my servants the prophets. Yet they have not obeyed me nor paid heed; they have stiffened their necks and done worse than their fathers. When you speak all these words to them, they will not listen to you either; when you call to them, they will not answer you. Say to them: This is the nation which does not listen to the voice of the LORD, its God, or take correction. Faithfulness has disappeared; the word itself is banished from their speech.” (cf. Jer 7, 1-26) The Lord asks one only thing: the obedience to his word with an always renewed, pure spirit, rich in love and in faithfulness.**

**Let us read the text of Mk 2,18-22**

**The disciples of John and of the Pharisees were accustomed to fast. People came to him and objected, "Why do the disciples of John and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" Jesus answered them, "Can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast. But the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast on that day. No one sews a piece of unshrunken cloth on an old cloak. If he does, its fullness pulls away, the new from the old, and the tear gets worse. Likewise, no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the skins are ruined. Rather, new wine is poured into fresh wineskins."**

**What is the new skin in which we always have to pour the wine of our obedience? The new skin is not a new religion, a new practice. The new skin is the Holy Spirit. Since the Holy Spirit is always new, our obedience to the Word will have to be always new. Our love for the Lord will have to be always new. Our understanding of the Word will have to be always new. In our most holy faith, everything is a way so that our obedience to the Lord be always pure, always holy, always new, in a crescendo of love into love, of light into light, of truth into truth, of justice into justice, of faithfulness into faithfulness. Even the fasting must be renewed by the Word. Without the constant renewal of the Word, the fasting, too, becomes a useless sacrifice. Here is the true fasting of the Christian: a fasting of abstention from every disobedience so that he lives of most pure, perennial obedience. May the Mother of God obtain for us fullness of wisdom by the Holy Spirit to live the Word of Jesus entirely.**