**WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 12 – XXVIII WEEK O.T. [C]**

**Woe to you Pharisees! You pay tithes of mint and of rue and of every garden herb, but you pay no attention to judgment and to love for God. These you should have done, without overlooking the others.**

**The “woe” in the Holy Scripture is a very serious warning. If one does not turn back in the obedience to the Law, because one wants to remain in the disobedience to it, the “woe” in time becomes eternal “woe” and it is damnation. The first “woe” attests that the Pharisees have abolished the moral Law, cancelling the righteousness that is obedience to the Commandments. They have substituted it with the ritual law. In the obedience, everything is pleasing to the Lord. In the disobedience, nothing is pleasing to Him. Here is the second “woe.” “Woe to you Pharisees! You love the seat of honor in synagogues and greetings in marketplaces.” What is the true meaning of this “woe”? What is the essence of the hidden evil in it? This “woe” denounces a true betrayal. Betrayal of what or of whom? It is betrayal of one’s own ministry. Betrayal of the religion. Betrayal of the Lord. One does not live the ministry to serve, but to be served. The Pharisees must teach with the word and the life that God must be loved, desired, craved, listened. It is not the man who must be admired, contemplated, worshipped, exalted. It is betrayal of the Lord because the Pharisees, instead of being ministers at the service of the glory of the Lord, are ministers at the service of their own glory, exaltation, pride, honour, name. Religion always knows these abominations. The Pharisees have taken away God from the heart of men and they have substituted him with their person. They have abolished the Law and in its place they have installed their traditions. The third “woe” reveals all the moral and spiritual danger of the Pharisees. It is an invisible danger. The contact with the grave made the person who had touched it uncleansed. This is the reason why the graves were indicated. Sometimes, though, the grave was not enough indicated. People walked over it and they were contaminated. They were made uncleansed. Invisible graves are the Pharisees. The contact, even by inadvertence, with them made uncleansed. Uncleanness is in the faith, in the religion, in the morality, in the revelation. Their God is not the God of Abraham and their faith is not that of Moses. Whoever enters in contact with them passes from the truth in the falsity and he does not know it either. He becomes immoral, idolater, false worshipper of the true God and he does not know to be so. This “woe” will always accompany the true religion.**

**Let us read the text of Lk 11,42-46**

**Woe to you Pharisees! You pay tithes of mint and of rue and of every garden herb, but you pay no attention to judgment and to love for God. These you should have done, without overlooking the others. Woe to you Pharisees! You love the seat of honor in synagogues and greetings in marketplaces. Woe to you! You are like unseen graves over which people unknowingly walk." Then one of the scholars of the law said to him in reply, "Teacher, by saying this you are insulting us too." And he said, "Woe also to you scholars of the law! You impose on people burdens hard to carry, but you yourselves do not lift one finger to touch them.**

**So far Jesus has spoken only to the Pharisees. He has turned no words to the scribes. Now one of the scholar of the Law intervenes and says to him: "Teacher, by saying this you are insulting us too." Truth must never be considered offensive toward the Person. The “woe” in the Scripture is not offence. Instead, it is severe warning so that one abandons the way one is walking that is a way of perdition. When Jesus invites you not to persevere in evil, this is not offence. It is a sublime act of charity. We must always separate the truth uttered in the manner of the uncleansed spirits, that has the purpose to harm Jesus, and the Truth uttered by Jesus that has as purpose the eternal salvation of the person to whom the Truth is said. Falsity offends. Lie humiliates man. Never the Truth. Truth is for the exaltation of the man, never for his offence or of the mortification of humiliation. Feeling offended by the uttered Truth is attestation that one is out of the light.**

**The fourth “woe” reveals what the sin of the scholars of the Law is: “"Woe also to you scholars of the law! You impose on people burdens hard to carry, but you yourselves do not lift one finger to touch them.”. No one is lord of the Law. Only the Lord is the Lord of his Law. The Lord has forbidden both to add and to take away from his Law. As taking away is a sin of disobedience, so adding is a sin of disobedience. Law is Law. If one adds, it is no longer the Law. If one takes away, it is no longer the Law. The same thing is valid for the Gospel. The Gospel is the Gospel. If one adds, it is no longer Gospel. If one takes away, it is no longer the Gospel. Even when one proclaims the Law and teaches it, one must teach and proclaim it with great charity, mercy, piety, compassion. Charity is not in taking away, but in being able to say the Gospel with love, for love and with convincement. For Jesus, the way of teaching is only one: before teaching, everyone must live the Gospel. Living it, one also knows how to teach it. The one who does not observe it is a bad teacher. If one does not live it, how can he teach it? Moreover, in teaching, one must be firm, strict and intransigent with himself, merciful and pitiful with the others. Instead, we are firm and intransigent with the others, great in mercy with ourselves. One should use the same measure, at least. A Saint used to say: “Better being accused by God for having been of great compassion and patience with those who are not still able to observe the Gospel, instead of being rebuked or reprobated for having been extremely strict or intransigent.” May the Mother of God help us. We want to live in the purity of the Gospel.**