**TUESDAY NOVEMBER 08 – XXXII WEEK O.T. [C]**

**When you have done all you have been commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants; we have done what we were obliged to do.'**

**In the Gospel, there is the unprofitable servant and the slothful servant. The slothful servant, the lazy servant, is that servant that has not put to good use the talent given to him by the master so that he used it to produce other talents. We know that this servant has been excluded from the joy of his master: "It will be as when a man who was going on a journey called in his servants and entrusted his possessions to them. To one he gave five talents; to another, two; to a third, one - to each according to his ability. Then he went away. Immediately the one who received five talents went and traded with them, and made another five. Likewise, the one who received two made another two. But the man who received one went off and dug a hole in the ground and buried his master's money. After a long time the master of those servants came back and settled accounts with them. The one who had received five talents came forward bringing the additional five. He said, 'Master, you gave me five talents. See, I have made five more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities. Come, share your master's joy.' (Then) the one who had received two talents also came forward and said, 'Master, you gave me two talents. See, I have made two more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities. Come, share your master's joy.' Then the one who had received the one talent came forward and said, 'Master, I knew you were a demanding person, harvesting where you did not plant and gathering where you did not scatter; so out of fear I went off and buried your talent in the ground. Here it is back.' His master said to him in reply, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I did not plant and gather where I did not scatter? Should you not then have put my money in the bank so that I could have got it back with interest on my return? Now then! Take the talent from him and give it to the one with ten. For to everyone who has, more will be given and he will grow rich; but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And throw this useless servant into the darkness outside, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth.” (Mt 25,14-30).**

**The unprofitable servant, instead, is the one who has fulfilled the will of his Lord even in the littlest details, even in the minimal precepts, as Jesus teaches in his Sermon of the Mountain: "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.” (Mt 5,17-20). Why, when we have done all that we were commanded to do, do we have to declare ourselves unprofitable servants? Because everything happened in us for grace of God. If we do not sin, it is for grace of God, not for our merit. If we are faithful to the Gospel, it is for grace of God, not for our merit. If we observe every command that is given to us, is it is for grace of God, not for our merit. If we love Christ Jesus, it is for grace of God and not for our merit. If we are faithful to the mission that was entrusted to us, it is for grace of God and not for our merit. Here is what the Apostle Paul teaches: “I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, brothers, so that you may learn from us not to go beyond what is written, so that none of you will be inflated with pride in favor of one person over against another. Who confers distinction upon you? What do you possess that you have not received? But if you have received it, why are you boasting as if you did not receive it?” (1Cor 4,6-7). Why do we have to consider ourselves not unprofitable, but unprofitable servants? We are servants, if we let the grace of God do everything it has to do through us. If we do not let the grace do, we are not servants. However, since everything is us is fruit of the grace, we are unprofitable servants.**

**Let us read the text of Lk 17,7-10**

**"Who among you would say to your servant who has just come in from plowing or tending sheep in the field, 'Come here immediately and take your place at table'? Would he not rather say to him, 'Prepare something for me to eat. Put on your apron and wait on me while I eat and drink. You may eat and drink when I am finished'? Is he grateful to that servant because he did what was commanded? So should it be with you. When you have done all you have been commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants; we have done what we were obliged to do.'"**

**In order to understand this most holy truth, let us be helped by a hoe. The farmer cannot turn the soil over without the hoe. The hoe without the farmer is a useless instrument. The farmer takes it in his hand and turns it into a profitable instrument. Here is our truth. We are servants, but unprofitable without grace. Grace takes us and turns us into profitable instruments. But it is the grace that, from unprofitable, turns us into profitable. We are, we always remain unprofitable instruments. This is our nature. We are instruments, though. We are profitable if we let ourselves be always ruled by the grace of the Lord and by his Holy Spirit. This truth must never be forgotten. Even the Virgin Mary is an unprofitable servant for herself. The Lord takes Her and turns Her into Mother of his Only Begotten Son.**