



1) OPENING PRAYER

Father,
your love for us
surpasses all our hopes and desires.
Forgive our failings,
keep us in your peace
and lead us in the way of salvation.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

2) GOSPEL READING - LUKE 11,27-28

*It happened that as Jesus was speaking, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said, 'Blessed the womb that bore you and the breasts that fed you!'
But he replied, 'More blessed still are those who hear the word of God and keep it!'*

3) REFLECTION

- Today's Gospel is very brief, but it has a very important significance in the Gospel of Luke in general. It gives us the key to understand what Luke teaches regarding Mary, the Mother of Jesus, in the so called Gospel of the Infancy (Lk 1 and 2).
- Luke 11, 27: The exclamation of the woman. "At that time as Jesus was speaking, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said: "Blessed the womb that bore you and the breasts that fed you!" The creative imagination of some apocryphal books suggests that the woman was a neighbour of Our Lady, there in Nazareth. She had a son called Dimas, who with other boys of Galilee at that time, went to war with the Romans, was made a prisoner and killed at the side of Jesus. He was the good thief (Lk 23, 39-43). His mother, having heard about the good that Jesus did to people, remembered her neighbour, Mary, and said: "Mary must be very happy to have such a son!"
- Luke 11, 28: The response of Jesus. Jesus responds, giving the greatest praise to his mother: "More blessed still are those who hear the word of God and keep it". Luke speaks little about Mary: here (Lk 11, 28) and in the Gospel of the infancy (Lk 1 and 2). For him, Luke, Mary is the Daughter of Sion, image of the new People of God. He

represents Mary as the model for the life of the communities. In Vatican Council II, the document prepared on Mary was inserted in the last chapter of the document *Lumen Gentium* on the Church. Mary is the model for the Church. And especially in the way in which Mary relates with the Word of God, Luke considers her as an example for the life of the communities: "Blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it". Mary teaches us how to accept the Word of God, how to incarnate it, live it, deepen it, make it be born and grow, allow it to shape us, even when we do not understand it, or when it makes us suffer. This is the vision which is subjacent in the Gospel of the Infancy (Lk 1 and 2). The key to understand these two chapters is given to us by today's Gospel: "Blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!" Let us see in these chapters how Mary enters into relationship with the Word of God.

a) Luke 1, 26-38:

The Annunciation: "Let it happen to me as you have said!"

To know how to open oneself, to accept the Word of God so that it becomes incarnate.

b) Luke 1, 39-45:

The Visitation: "Blessed is she who has believed!"

To know how to recognize the Word of God in a visit and in many other facts of life.

c) Luke 1, 46-56:

The Magnificat: "The Lord has done great things for me!"

To recognize the Word in the story of the people and sing a song of resistance and hope.

d) Luke 2, 1-20:

The Birth of Our Lord: "She pondered all these things in her heart!"

There was no place for them. The marginalized accept the Word.

e) Luke 2, 21-32:

The Presentation: "My eyes have seen the salvation!"

The many years of life purify the eyes.

f) Luke 2, 33-38:

Simeon and Anna: "A sword will pierce your soul too!"

To accept and incarnate the Word in life, to be a sign of contradiction.

g) Luke 2, 39-52:

At twelve years old in the Temple: "Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"

They did not understand what he meant!

h) Luke 11, 27-28:

The praise to the mother: "Blessed the womb that bore you!"

Blessed are those who hear the Word of God and keep it.

4) PERSONAL QUESTIONS

- Do you succeed in discovering the Word of God in your life?
- How do you live devotion to Mary, the Mother of Jesus?

5) CONCLUDING PRAYER

Sing to him, make music for him,

recount all his wonders!
Glory in his holy name,
let the hearts that seek Yahweh rejoice! (Ps 105,2-3)