



1) Opening prayer

Almighty God,
every good thing comes from you.
Fill our hearts with love for you,
increase our faith,
and by your constant care
protect the good you have given us.
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 6,1-5

It happened that one Sabbath Jesus was walking through the cornfields, and his disciples were picking ears of corn, rubbing them in their hands and eating them.

Some of the Pharisees said, 'Why are you doing something that is forbidden on the Sabbath day?'

Jesus answered them, 'So you have not read what David did when he and his followers were hungry- how he went into the house of God and took the loaves of the offering and ate them and gave them to his followers, loaves which the priests alone are allowed to eat?'

And he said to them, 'The Son of man is master of the Sabbath.'

3) Reflection

- The Gospel today speaks about the conflict concerning the observance of the Sabbath –Saturday. The observance of the Sabbath was a central law, one of the Ten Commandments. This was a very ancient Law the value of which was stressed after the Exile. During the Exile, the people had to work seven days a week from morning until evening, without any conditions to meet and meditate on the Word of God, to pray together and to share faith, their problems and their hopes. Therefore, there was an urgent need to stop at least one day a week to get together and encourage one another during the very difficult situation of the exile. Otherwise they would have lost their faith. It was then that faith was reborn and the observance of Saturday was re-established.

- Luke 6, 1-2: The cause of the conflict. On Saturday the disciples were walking across the cornfields and they were picking ears of corn. Matthew 12, 1 says that they were

hungry (Mt 12, 1). The Pharisees invoke the Bible to say it was a transgression of the Law of Saturday: Why do you do this which is not permitted to do on Saturday?" (cf. Ex 20, 8-11).

- Luke 6, 3-4: The response of Jesus. Immediately Jesus responds recalling that David himself also did things which were prohibited, because he took the sacred bread from the Temple and gave it to the soldiers to eat because they were hungry (I S 21, 2-7). Jesus knew the Bible and referred to it to show that the arguments of others had no foundation. In Matthew, the response of Jesus is more complete. He not only recalls the story of David, but also quotes the Legislation which permits the priests to work on Saturday and he quotes Prophet Hosea: "Mercy is what pleases me, not sacrifice". He quotes a Biblical text or a historical text, a legislative text and a prophetic text (cf. Mt 12, 1-18). At that time there was no printed Bible as we have it today. In each community there was only one Bible, hand written, which remained in the Synagogue. If Jesus knew the Bible so well, it means that in the 30 years of his life in Nazareth he participated intensely in the life of the community, where every Saturday the Scriptures were read. We still lack very much to have the same familiarity with the Bible and the same participation in the community.

- Luke 6, 5: The conclusion for all of us. And Jesus ends with the following phrase: The Son of Man is Master of the Sabbath! The Lord of Saturday! Jesus, Son of Man, who lives in intimacy with God, discovers the sense of the Bible not from outside, from without, but from inside, that is, discovers the sense starting at the roots, beginning from his intimacy with the author of the Bible who is God himself. Because of this, he calls himself Master of Saturday. In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus revitalizes the law of Saturday saying: "Saturday was instituted for man and not man for Saturday".

4) Personal questions

- How do you spend Sunday, which is our "Sabbath"? Do you go to Mass because it is an obligation, in order to avoid sin or to be with God?
- Jesus knew the Bible almost by heart. What does the Bible represent for me?

5) Concluding Prayer

My mouth shall always praise Yahweh,
let every creature bless his holy name
for ever and ever. (Ps 145,21)