November 18th: Memorial of Saint Odo, Abbot of Cluny

Gospel text (*Lk* 12:35-40): Jesus said to his disciples: "(…) Be like servants who await their master's return from a wedding, ready to open immediately when he comes and knocks. Blessed are those servants whom the master finds vigilant on his arrival. Amen, I say to you, he will gird himself, have them recline at table, and proceed to wait on them (…)".

Saint Odo, Abbot of Cluny (c. 878/879 – 942)

EDITORIAL TEAM evangeli.net (based on texts by Benedict XVI)
(Città del Vaticano, Vatican)

Today, I propose to you the figure of Saint Odo, abbot: he belongs to the monastic Middle Ages and leads us, in particular, to the monastery of Cluny, which was among the most illustrious and renowned. His father consecrated him to the holy bishop Martin of Tours, under whose beneficent shadow Odo spent his entire life. He was still an adolescent when —during a Christmas vigil— he felt this prayer spontaneously rise to his lips:
«My Lady, Mother of mercy, who on this night gave birth to the Savior, pray for me. May your glorious and singular childbirth be, O most merciful one, my refuge».
The title "Mother of mercy" would be the way he would always choose to address Mary, also calling her the "only hope of the world"…

Fascinated by the Benedictine ideal, Odo left Tours and entered as a monk in the Benedictine abbey of Baume, later moving to Cluny, of which he became the second abbot (927). From that center of spiritual life, he was able to exercise a broad influence on the monasteries of the continent.

He was characterized by a love for interior life, a view of the world as a fragile reality, a constant inclination toward detachment from material things, and a deep eschatological aspiration. Particular mention should be made of the devotion to the Body and Blood of Christ which Odo, in contrast to the widespread negligence of his time, always cultivated with conviction.

—Odo did not give in to pessimism and would exclaim: «O ineffable depths of divine mercy! God pursues sins and yet protects sinners. The abbot of Cluny loved to linger in contemplation of the mercy of Christ, the "lover of mankind"».