October 11th: Memorial of Saint Soledad Torres Acosta, religious

Gospel text (*Lk* 10:25-37): There was a scholar of the law who stood up to test Jesus and said, "Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus said to him, "What is written in the law? How do you read it?" He said in reply, "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." He replied to him, "You have answered correctly; do this and you will live."

But because he wished to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied, "A man fell victim to robbers as he went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. They stripped and beat him and went off leaving him half-dead. A priest happened to be going down that road, but when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. Likewise a Levite came to the place, and when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. But a Samaritan traveler who came upon him was moved with compassion at the sight. He approached the victim, poured oil and wine over his wounds and bandaged them. Then he lifted him up on his own animal, took him to an inn, and cared for him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper with the instruction, 'Take care of him. If you spend more than what I have given you, I shall repay you on my way back.' Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers' victim?" He answered, "The one who treated him with mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

"But a Samaritan traveler who came upon him was moved with compassion at the sight."

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Today, we celebrate the "dies natalis" of St. Maria Soledad Torres y Acosta (1826-1887), her birth to eternal life. "Be merciful, just as also your Father is merciful" (Lk 6:36): we must have a sensitive regard of mercy towards the weak who suffers. "For I was… naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me" (Mt 25:36): we Christians cannot forget that what we do to our brother we are doing it to the Son of God.

Mother Soledad had this perception to serve the sick in his own home, in his own environment. This was

her charisma, the grace of the Spirit that obliged her and which the Servants of Mary maintain.

Pope Francis insists on the need to go to the existential peripheries, where human beings suffer morally and physically, to boost them from the prostration, in the style of Christ, who came here, searching what was lost. Mother Soledad and the Servants of Mary know how to see in the sick, the sufferings of Christ in His members, as the Apostle Paul would say.

In his exhortation "A Samaritan church", Cardinal Martínez Sistach, Archbishop of Barcelona, said that as believers in the style of Christ, we have to be closer to the wounded man, unafraid of any “ritual or legal pollution"; what matters is the dignity of the human being. “I was ill and you cared for me... ”: this key principle stirred Mother Soledad. And the Church proposes it as an example to emulate, while knowing that we are following the footsteps of Christ, the Good Samaritan.

When the Church does not serve the injured man, mistreated by life, it fails to follow the steps of Christ. The Church that is not at the service of mankind has not understood the message that Christ repeats to us time and again: “the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mt 20:28). So we, as Mother Soledad did, should spend our life together with the wounded and sick man for his salvation, while knowing that by doing this we serve the very Son of God.