

September 2, 2018 – 22<sup>nd</sup> Sunday Ordinary Time



*MAY JESUS CHRIST BE PRAISED  
NOW AND FOREVER!!!*

# SPIRITUAL PONDERINGS

## Five Signs of a Modern-Day Pharisee

Recently someone sent me a copy of an article titled: “Five Signs of a Modern-Day Pharisee.” The article was written by Sr. Aletheia Noble. She is the author of the book: *The Prodigal You Love: Inviting Loved Ones Back to the Church*. I would like to share with you some thoughts on her very insightful article. Quotes from her article will be in bold and my commentary will be in the normal font.

**Jesus came to put a harlot above a Pharisee, a penitent robber above a high priest, and a prodigal son above his exemplary brother. To all the phonies and fakers who would say that they could not join the Church because his Church was not holy enough, he would ask, “How holy must the Church be before you will enter into it?”** —  
Fulton J. Sheen

I think it is important to point out that the Pharisees did not start off desiring to be in opposition of God’s plan for salvation. It is a sort of divine irony that those who wanted to do God’s will the most were the ones who became the greatest obstacle to God’s plan of salvation.

I am assuming that the Pharisees were a lot like the pagans of their day who had the belief that the gods were divine beings who had to be placated. If they made the gods happy then the gods would bless them. If they upset the gods then they could expect the gods to

punish them. The story of the Odyssey is a great example of this thinking.

The problem arises is that the Pharisees assume that the way to please God is to be absolutely perfect in their worship and this is done by keeping the imperfect (sinners) out of God’s sight by keeping them out of public worship. Jesus reveals to us that God is made happy not by animal sacrifices and perfect rituals but by us loving Him and others.

**I find it frustrating when people speak about the Pharisees as if they were just a historical example of what not to do. Something outside of us. In fact, most often when people speak of Pharisees, they are really speaking Pharisaiically: “Thank goodness I am not like those people!”**

So often, when I am pointing out others faults, I am doing so because I am trying to direct attention away from me. When I am happy with who I am (knowing that I am loved by God) I am less likely to spend my time pointing out the faults of others.

### 1. A Leaven of Unrest

Jesus tells us to “beware of the leaven of the Pharisees” (Mk 8:15). It is interesting to consider the role of leaven or fermentation in the making of bread. It starts small but it infects the entire loaf. In fact, one of the definitions of the word ferment is to “incite or stir up (trouble or disorder).”



Jesus entered into the world so calmly that most people missed it. He lived his life simply. The devil came to scatter. Jesus had an angelic army invaded the world and offered peace. The devil scatters

**When we behave like the Pharisees, we stir up trouble among the faithful. Often, our intentions are good. But our actions cause great unrest, an unhealthy and unholy “leavening” of the greater faithful. We can discern whether unrest is unhealthy by analyzing its fruits.**

**If the fruit of a person’s “leaven” is often fear, anger and unrest, rather than peace, love, joy and the rest of the fruits of the Spirit, then one must beware. The Lord is not at work where the fruits of the Spirit are not present. He is particularly not at work where the fruit of a person’s actions is fear: “There is no fear in love” (Jn 4:18). When our behavior is a holy leavening, it pushes others to desire holiness, to draw closer to God and to act in charity.**

***Jesus, help my actions and words lead others to holiness and to an experience of God and the fruits of the Spirit.***

Would people around you describe you as a life-giving person? Would they tell others that they want to be a better person because you inspire them? Or would they describe you as someone who sucks the life out of others? Are you constantly putting people down? The Pharisees were constantly putting other people down instead of seeing them as brother and sisters.

The Pharisees seem to assume that there is a competition for God's love and they therefore must do whatever they can to get ahead. This is sad because there is no competition for God's love because God's love is unconditional and limitless. Love when divided and nurtured appropriately grows.



***Jesus, help my actions and words lead others to holiness and to an experience of God and the fruits of the Spirit.***

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## BREAKING OPEN THE WORD

**September 2, 2018 Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time Lectionary: 125 Gospel MK 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23**

When the Pharisees with some scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus, they observed that some of his disciples ate their meals with unclean, that is, unwashed, hands. — For the Pharisees and, in fact, all Jews, do not eat without carefully washing their hands, keeping the tradition of the elders. And on coming from the marketplace they do not eat without purifying themselves. And there are many other things that they have traditionally observed, the purification of cups and jugs and kettles and beds. — So the Pharisees and scribes questioned him, "Why do your disciples not follow the tradition of the elders but instead eat a meal with unclean hands?" He responded, "Well did Isaiah prophesy about you hypocrites, as it is written: *This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines human precepts.* You disregard God's commandment but cling to human tradition." He summoned the crowd again and said to them, "Hear me, all of you, and understand. Nothing that enters one from outside can defile that person; but the things that come out from within are what defile. "From within people, from their hearts, come evil thoughts, unchastity, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, licentiousness, envy, blasphemy, arrogance, folly. All these evils come from within and they defile."



### **Spiritual Reflection:**

"Sin is believing the lie that you are self-created, self-dependent and self-sustained." - Saint Augustine. Jesus points out in today's Gospel that sin is caused by our bad ways of thinking and not by anything from the outside. This is why it is not enough for an alcoholic to stop drinking. He or she must also work a program that helps them change the way they think.

### **Spiritual Questions:**

1. How does the seven deadly sins (Pride, Envy, Wrath/Anger, Gluttony, Avarice/Greed, Sloth, and Lust) effect the way you think?

## Quotes of the Week

The world was won for Christ not by arguments but by sanctity: "What you are speaks so loud, I can hardly hear what you say." - Peter Kreeft

People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.

"I LOVE St. Joseph so much because he had the care of the Blessed Virgin." – John Vianney

Mary was made Mother of God to obtain salvation for many who, on account of their wicked lives, could not be saved according to the rigor of Divine justice, but might be saved with the help of her sweet mercy and powerful intercession. -St. John Chrysostom

Patience is waiting. Not passively waiting. That is laziness. But to keep going when the going is hard and slow - that is patience. The two most powerful warriors are patience and time. - Leo Tolstoy

Patience is the companion of wisdom. - Saint Augustine

Have patience with all things, but chiefly have patience with yourself. Do not lose courage in considering your own imperfections but instantly set about remedying them -- every day begin the task anew. - Saint Francis de Sales



2. What steps do you take in order to correct the “bad thinking” that goes on in your mind that leads you into sin?
3. How can the Church help you fix your way of thinking?
4. What “bad thinking” habits do you carry with you?
5. How can prayer help you overcome these “bad thinking” habits?

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## PRO-LIFE

### PRAYER FOR THOSE WHO OPPOSE LIFE

Jesus, Prince of Peace, you have asked us to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us. We pray for those who are currently enemies of life and those who oppose us. With the help of the Holy Spirit, may all people learn to work together and grow to have a deeper respect for human life. So that justice which brings true and lasting peace can come to our world and all life be seen as precious. To you be glory and honor for ever and ever. - Amen

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## St. Monica Society

*Please join us in praying a special prayer each month for Catholics who have fallen away from their faith.*

### PRAYER FOR HEALING OF MIND, BODY, and SOUL

O Jesus, come into the sorrows, anxieties, mental troubles of those who have rejected you. Deliver them from the painful memories of the past. Fill them with your Holy Spirit. Help them to forgive all those who hurt have hurt them. May they come to see You and your Church as the way to true happiness. Fill them and us with your Holy Spirit. Thank you, Jesus. Praise you Jesus. Amen.

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## PRAYER(S) OF THE WEEK

### PRAYER FOR HARMONY AND UNITY

Lord Jesus, open our hearts and minds to the guidance of your Spirit. Help us to discern the Father's will for your Church today. Do not let our weaknesses or prejudices hinder your work, and teach us to do all we can to make the kingdom of the Father come on earth. Bring us to the harmony and unity given by your Spirit, and make us one in praising God with you. Hear us, Lord, for we are your beloved people. Amen!

### PRAYER FOR THE JOY OF FORGIVENESS

Heavenly father, through the obedience of Jesus, who offered His Life in the service of all, help me with Your Kindness. Make me strong through the Eucharist. May I put into action the saving Mystery I celebrate in the Mass. Protect me with Your Love and prepare me for eternal happiness.

### THE PRAYER, SPIRITUAL ARMOR OF PRAYER.

Heavenly Father, we ask You today for Your truth, As a belt tight around our waists. We put on the zeal, to announce Your good news of peace, As shoes for our feet. We put on Your righteousness, O Christ, as our breastplate. And the hope of salvation, As a helmet for our head. Father we take up faith, as a shield which is

able to put out, All the fiery darts of the enemy. And the sword of the Spirit, which is Your Word, O Lord. Father may the love, with which You have loved Jesus, be in us and may Jesus be in us. We ask You for the grace, Of a servant heart. Amen.

### THE PRAYER, HEAVENLY FATHER, RECREATE ME

Heavenly Father, I call on You right now in a special way. It is through Your power that I was created. Every breath I take, every morning I wake, and every moment of every hour, I live under Your power. Father, I ask You now to touch me with the same power. For if You created me from nothing, You can certainly recreate me. Fill me with the healing power of Your Spirit. Cast out anything that should not be in me. Mend what is broken. Root out any unproductive cells. Open any blocked arteries or veins and rebuild any damaged areas. Remove all inflammation and cleanse any infection. Let the warmth of your healing love pass through my body to make new any unhealthy areas so that my body function the way You created it to function. And Father, restore me to full health in mind and body so that I may serve You the rest of my life. I ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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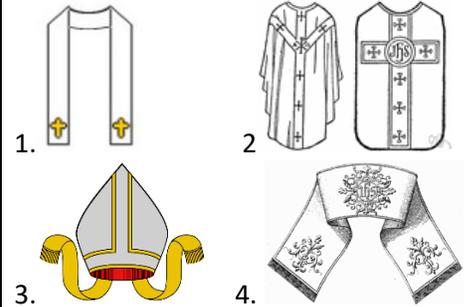
# TRIVIA

## Last Week's Answers

1. What color in a stained glass window represents "divinity"?  
Answer: Red – it was the hardest color to make.
2. What color in a stained glass window represents "humanity"?  
Answer: Blue
3. What is the practical reason for gargoyles on the outside of a church?  
Answer: They were gutter spots.
4. What is the "spiritual" symbolism for gargoyles on the outside of a church?  
Answer: Represented the evils of the world

## This Week's Question

Identify the following vestments:



## Humor

A child asked his father, "How were people born?" So his father said, "Adam and Eve made babies, then their babies became adults and made babies, and so on." The child then went to his mother, asked her the same question and she told him, "We were monkeys then we evolved to become like we are now." The child ran back to his father and said, "You lied to me!" His father replied, "No, your mom was talking about her side of the family."