

September 9, 2018 – 23rd Sunday Ordinary Time



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

SPIRITUAL PONDERINGS

Five Signs of a Modern-Day Pharisee

We will continue to reflect on Sr. Aletheia Noble's article "Five Signs of a Modern-Day Pharisee." Quotes from her article will be in bold and my commentary will be in the normal font.

2. Surveillance Experts

There is one Gospel passage that makes me laugh out loud every time I read it. Jesus is walking through a field with his disciples on the Sabbath, and the disciples are picking wheat because they are hungry. The Pharisees (who must have been hiding in the fields!) pop up and immediately challenge Jesus because his disciples are breaking the Sabbath (Mk 2:23–24).

The lengths to which the Pharisees went to find something wrong with Jesus and his followers were truly absurd. Some variation of the phrase "they were watching him" can be found over and over in the Gospels. While Jesus is busy healing, performing miracles and preaching the kingdom of God, *the Pharisees' eyes were always on him*, not in order to learn from him but to find something he was doing wrong.

Since all human beings are imperfect, it is really not hard to discover other people's faults. It is harder to point out the goodness in others because we have become so conditioned to looking for the faults of others. We seem also to take the

good things other do for us for granted.

There is rarely a comment on the Internet that is not basically, "Yes but ..." We love to plow right through all the good things and narrow right in on the one part that didn't seem quite right. We become Pharisees when we are always focused outward with an eye toward criticism. Nothing is ever good enough for a Pharisee. And nothing merits rejoicing, unless it is the downfall of others.

How much time do we spend praising others? How much time do we spend tearing others down?



Jesus, help me to focus on you, not like the Pharisees but like a child who wants nothing more than to imitate his or her Father. Help me see the dignity of others as you see them, and to treat others with respect and great love.

3. Thank God I'm Not Like (Insert Label Here)

We all remember the Pharisee in Scripture who stood up and prayed by saying, "I thank you God that I am not like so-and-so!" (Lk 18:11). This Pharisee genuinely believed that proper prayer involved taking credit for everything one did right. This is the danger in being close to right; we begin to take credit for it. We look at others who are doing much worse things, and assume we escaped that path



because something about us makes us better.

Reading Sr. Aletheia's words made me think of St. Philip Neri's quote: "Except for the grace of God there go I."

Everything I have is a gift from God. I did not choose my parents or the time period I would be born in. Everything I have is from God. Thank you God.

We think, *My sins may be bad, but thank God they are not as bad as that person's sins!* Thank God I'm not like that loosey-goosey liberal, uptight rad trad, heretic progressive, zany charismatic, stick-in-the-mud ultraconservative or ignorant cafeteria Catholic. Or you may even be reading this and thinking, *Thank God I am not a Pharisee!* The problem with this way of thinking, and it is evident in the behavior of the saints, is that true holiness focuses on what needs improvement in oneself. And if the saints could find a lot of things in need of improvement, then that is

probably the same attitude we should have!

Any sin we commit – no matter how large or how small – hurts God because it is a sign to Him of our ingratitude.

As I think about how hurt I am when others do not show me gratitude, I can imagine only slightly how God hurts. It is important though that God does not hurt because we

somehow physically wound us but because we hurt Him only because He chooses to care what we think because He loves us.



Jesus, help me thank you for all the graces you have given me in my life. Help me to be a source of light for others and to be open to what others have to teach me.

BREAKING OPEN THE WORD

September 9, 2018 23 Sun. Ordinary Time Lectionary: 128 Gospel MK 7:31-37

Again, Jesus left the district of Tyre and went by way of Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, into the district of the Decapolis. And people brought to him a deaf man who had a speech impediment and begged him to lay his hand on him. He took him off by himself away from the crowd. He put his finger into the man's ears and, spitting, touched his tongue; then he looked up to heaven and groaned, and said to him, "Ephphatha!"— that is, "Be opened!" — And immediately the man's ears were opened, his speech impediment was removed, and he spoke plainly. He ordered them not to tell anyone. But the more he ordered them not to, the more they proclaimed it. They were exceedingly astonished and they said, "He has done all things well. He makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."



Spiritual Reflection:

Jesus in today's Gospel heals the man using his spit – a little gross – but I think it helps us to understand something about miracles that St. John of the Cross explains: "God does not work miracles and grant favors by means of some statutes so these statutes may be held in higher esteem than others, but so he may awaken the dormant devotion and affection of the faithful through his wonderful works."

Spiritual Questions:

1. Have you ever gone on a pilgrimage to a place where a miracle or apparition has taken place? Did it help your faith grow?
 2. What Eucharistic Miracles have you read about? How do they help bring people closer to God?
 3. What is your favorite Marian apparition? How do Marian apparitions bring people closer to God?
 4. What should a person do if their devotion to an apparition or a miracle becomes greater than their devotion to God?
 5. Do you think that today's Gospel is how Jesus normally healed people or was this a special circumstance?
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Quotes of the Week

Be more concerned with your character than your reputation, because your character is what you really are, while your reputation is merely what others think you are. - Coach John Wooden

If I'm not willing to change my schedule so that I can spend time with Jesus than I'm not really a disciple of His. - *Father Mike Schmitz*

The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting. It has been difficult; and left untried. - *G.K. Chesterton*

Don't be afraid of the radicalness of His demands... If He asks much of you it is because He knows you can give much. - *Saint John Paul the Great*

The cross is the school of love. – St. Maximilian Kolbe

"Together with Mary, let us seek to be sharers in this death which brought forth fruits of "new life" in the Resurrection: a death like this on the cross was infamous, and it was the death of her Son! But precisely there, at the foot of the cross, "where she stood, not without a divine plan," did not Mary realize in a new way everything that she had already heard on the day of Annunciation?" – JP II



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



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.



PRAYER(S) OF THE WEEK

PRAYER FOR PEACE # 1

O Lord Jesus Christ, who said to Your Apostles: "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you," regard not my sins but the faith of Your Church, and deign to give her peace and unity according to Your Will: Who live and reign, God, world without end. Amen.

PRAYER FOR PEACE # 2

Lord Jesus Christ, we praise You: Bring peace into the world By bringing Your peace into the hearts of all. Help us to turn away from sin and to follow You in love and service. Glory be yours, and honor, For ever and ever. Amen.

PRAYER FOR PEACE # 3

Lord, God of peace, who has created man, the object of your kindness, to be close to you in glory, we bless you and we thank you because you have sent us your beloved son, Jesus, making him the mystery of the pasch, the architect of all salvation, the source of all peace, the bond of true brotherhood. We thank you for the desire, the efforts, the realizations which your spirit

of peace has roused in our day: to replace hatred with love, diffidence with understanding, unconcern with care. Open yet more our hearts to the needs of all our brothers and sisters, so that we may be better able to build a true peace.

Remember, Father of mercy, all who are in pain, who suffer and die in the cause of a more brotherly world. For the men of every race of every tongue - may your kingdom come: your kingdom of justice, of peace, of love; and may the earth be filled with your glory. Amen. (By Pope Paul VI.)

A PRAYER FOR PEACE # 4

Almighty God, from whom all thoughts of truth and peace proceed, kindle in the hearts of all men the true love of peace, and guide with Your pure and peaceable wisdom those who make decisions for the nations of the earth; that in tranquility Your kingdom may go forward, till the earth be filled with the knowledge of Your love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (From the Roman Missal)



Humor

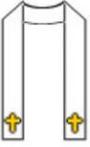
Q: Can a kangaroo jump higher than the Empire State Building?

A: Of course! The Empire State Building can't jump.

TRIVIA

Last Week's Answers

Identify the following vestments:

1.  1. Priest Stole
2.  2. Chasuble
3.  3. Miter
4.  4. Humeral Veil

This Week's Question

Which one does not belong?

1. Prayer Fasting Penance Almsgiving
2. Chasuble Stole Cope Alb
3. Surplus Miter Cross Ring
4. Faith Hope Love Peace