

September 16, 2018 - 24th 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.

4. Unhealthy Relationship with Authority

It is interesting to note that Jesus tells the people to submit to the authority of the Pharisees. He tells them to "Do everything they tell you" even though he warns that their example is not to be followed (Mt 23:3). When I first thought about this, I was astounded. Here is the Son of God, *submitting to the authority* of the Pharisees, because their earthly authority represented his Father's authority.

The Church has always placed a high importance on obedience to legitimate authority as long as it does not go against our informed conscience because sin entered the world through Adam and Eve's disobedience. There is also never excuse for a person to commit sin. Poor leadership is never a reason that allows a person to do evil.

The Pharisees, on the other hand, were incensed when they saw Jesus acting with authority. Jesus demonstrated his power by showing which practices were dispensable and which were essential to the meaning of the law. In response to Jesus' show of his divine authority, the Pharisees plot

his death. Jesus recognizes legitimate authority, but the Pharisees, while they are aware of an aspect of it, are blind to the source of authority itself.

As sinful human beings, we have an ambiguous relationship with authority from the start. It is hard for us to recognize the authority of God, let alone that of his mediators on earth. It's true that healthy rebellion and questioning can be a good thing. But we abuse this truth when we disobey because we think we know better than God or when criticism of others becomes an obsession that leads us to a lifestyle of disobedience.

We have to be careful that we do not allow an arrogance of intellect to blind us. Sometimes pilots will get target fixation where they will focus so much on their target that they do not see other dangers coming their way. Some people are so convinced in a person's guiltiness that they do not see other possible suspects.



Jesus, help me develop the virtue of obedience in my heart so that I may recognize your authority here on earth and become more gentle, docile and full of charity.



5. Unmerciful Exactness

In the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector, while the Pharisee pats himself on the back, the tax collector begs God for mercy. This is an interesting dynamic. The Pharisee believes he is well and does not see himself in need of mercy. But the tax collector knows he is sick and in need of God.

This inner dynamic in oneself often extends to others. If we see ourselves as in little need of mercy, we do not give mercy to others. If we know that we need copious amounts of God's mercy, then we extend that mercy to others. Why is this? Because when we know we are in need of mercy, we reach out to God and he scoops us up in his arms. When we have experienced this absolute and unconditional love of the Father, we hesitate less in giving that same love to others. We know it, we've experienced it, and we are overflowing with it.

One of the reasons, why it is important to go to the Sacrament of

Reconciliation often is because it helps us grow in our awareness of our sins. The more we are aware of God's mercy the easier it is to forgive others. If we think that having our sins forgiven is impossible then we are more likely to live in denial of our sins. If we deny our sins, we will find it hard to forgive others.

Everyone's heart grows cold sometimes like that of the Pharisee. We all have difficulty feeling compassion for certain people. When this happens, it helps to ask the Lord to help us

see our own sin more clearly, not so that we can become lost in guilt, but so that we can see our own need to accept God's mercy and extend it to others.



Jesus, welcome me into your merciful heart. I want to be a beacon of mercy and love for others; help me to become more like you.

BREAKING OPEN THE WORD

September 16, 2018 Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time Lectionary: 131 Gospel MK 8:27-35

Jesus and his disciples set out for the villages of Caesarea Philippi. Along the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" They said in reply, "John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others one of the prophets." And he asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter said to him in reply, "You are the Christ." Then he warned them not to tell anyone about him. He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer greatly and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and rise after three days. He spoke this openly. Then Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. At this he turned around and, looking at his disciples, rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do." He summoned the crowd with his disciples and said to them, "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and that of the gospel will save it."



Spiritual Reflection:

Light houses don't move, in fact it is their job not to move for they provide a reference point to people as we travel. St. Peter acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God. He is the "Spiritual Light House" that will not move and no matter what people say about Him, His light shines constantly to lead us home.

Spiritual Questions:

1. How is Jesus like a Light House
 2. How did public opinion let Jesus down then?
 3. How did public opinion let Jesus down today?
 4. Do you base your life decisions on Christ or do you expect Christ to adjust to you?
 5. What happens when you ignore the Light House?
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Quotes of the Week

God doesn't ask that we succeed in everything, but that we are faithful. However beautiful our work may be, let us not become attached to it. Always remain prepared to give it up, without losing your peace. - Mother Teresa

Christians must lean on the Cross of Christ just as travelers lean on a staff when they begin a long journey. - Anthony of Padua

As the family goes, so goes the nation and so goes the whole world in which we live. - Pope John Paul II

We should not bear it with bad grace if the answer to our prayer is long delayed. Rather, let us, because of this, show great patience and resignation. For He delays for this reason: that we may offer Him a fitting occasion of honoring us through His divine providence. - Saint John Chrysostom

Badness cannot succeed even in being bad in the same way in which goodness is good. Goodness is, so to speak, itself: badness is only spoiled goodness. Evil is a parasite, not an original thing. - C. S. Lewis



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 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

NOVENA FOR IMPOSSIBLE REQUESTS

(This Novena honors the nine months during which Our Lady carried Our Blessed Lord in her womb.)

"Hail, Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy, our life, our sweetness and our hope! To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve; to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn then, most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy towards us; and after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary. Amen."

V - Pray for us, most holy mother of God.

R - That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

"Virgin of the Incarnation, a thousand times we greet thee, a thousand times we praise thee for thy joy when God was incarnated in thee. Because thou art so powerful a Virgin and Mother of God, grant what we ask of thee for the love of God."

Here state your first intention.

Repeat all of above and then state your second intention.

Repeat all of above and then state your third intention.

CONCLUSION:

After the above prayers and intentions, say the Memorare.

Remember, O most Gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it

known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help or sought thy intercession was left unaided. Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of Virgins, my mother. To thee do I cry, before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me. Amen.

Hail Mary...

Blessed and praised be the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar, in Heaven, on earth and everywhere. Amen

NOVENA IN HONOUR OF MARY, HELP OF CHRISTIANS

DAY 1 - O Mary, powerful help of those Christians who approach the throne of your mercy with trust! Listen to the prayers of your children who invoke your help to avoid sin and the occasions of sin.

DAY 2. - O Mary most holy, kind and merciful mother, with your visible help you freed the Christian people from the ferocious assaults of the Muslims. Free our souls from the attacks of the devil, the world, and the flesh, so that we may always overcome the enemies of our salvation.

DAY 3. - Most powerful Queen of heaven, you triumphed over heresies which sought to tear your children away from the Church. Come to our assistance so that we may remain steadfast in our faith and may guard the purity of our hearts in the midst of the many dangers that beset us.

