

Wednesday of the Twenty-first Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Mt 23:27-32): Jesus said, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites. You are like whitewashed tombs, which appear beautiful on the outside, but inside are full of dead men's bones and every kind of filth. Even so, on the outside you appear righteous, but inside you are filled with hypocrisy and evildoing.

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites. You build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the memorials of the righteous, and you say, 'If we had lived in the days of our ancestors, we would not have joined them in shedding the prophets' blood.' Thus you bear witness against yourselves that you are the children of those who murdered the prophets; now fill up what your ancestors measured out!"

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites”

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Today, as in previous days, and in others to follow, we contemplate Jesus, beside himself, condemning those attitudes incompatible with a dignified and decent life, not only Christian but also human: “on the outside you appear righteous, but inside you are filled with hypocrisy and evildoing” (Mt 23:28). He confirms us that sincerity, honesty, loyalty, nobility, are virtues God loves and are, also, very much appreciated by us, humans.

Therefore, if I wish to avoid being a hypocrite, I must be very sincere. First, with God. Because He wants me pure in heart and hating all lies, as He is totally pure, the true Truth. Secondly, with myself, so that I am not the first one to be deceived, exposed to sin against the Holy Spirit for not admitting my own sins or not clearly

making them manifest in the Sacrament of Penance, or for not trusting God enough, He who never condemns the prodigal son or loses anyone for being a sinner, but rather for not admitting to be one. In the third place, with others, for —like in the case of Jesus— lies, deception, insincerity, dishonesty, disloyalty and low-mindedness..., drive us up the wall and, therefore, we should be able to apply to ourselves the principle: “Do unto others as you would have them to do unto you.”

In order not to fall in hypocrisy, we have to make ours these three attitudes —that we can just consider as plain common sense— while assuming that we need the sanctified grace, because of the original sin originated by the “father of lies”: the devil. This is why we should pay attention to St. Josemaria's exhortation: “When the time of examination comes, be prepared against the dumb devil”; we shall also bear in mind Origen, who says: «All faked saintliness remains dead because it does not work by the impulse of God», and we shall be always lead by the elementary and simple principle proposed by God: “Let your ‘Yes’ mean ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No’ mean ‘No.’” (Mt 5:37).

The Virgin Mary does not overdo herself with words, but her yes to goodness, to grace, was unique and truthful; and her ‘no’ to evil, to sin, was emphatic and sincere.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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“Men could not live with one another if there were not mutual confidence that they were being truthful to one another.” (Saint Thomas Aquinas)

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“A varnished putrefaction: this is the life of someone who is corrupt. Let us ask the Lord for the grace to flee from every form of deceit and to see ourselves as sinners. Sinners yes, corrupt no.” (Francis)

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“Christ's disciples have ‘put on the new man, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.’ (Eph 4:24). By ‘putting away falsehood,’ (Eph 4:25) they are to ‘put away all malice and all guile and insincerity and envy and all slander.’” (Catechism of the

Catholic Church, no. 2475)