

Tuesday of the Twenty-eighth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Lk 11:37-41): After Jesus had spoken, a Pharisee invited him to dine at his home. He entered and reclined at table to eat. The Pharisee was amazed to see that he did not observe the prescribed washing before the meal. The Lord said to him, “Oh you Pharisees! Although you cleanse the outside of the cup and the dish, inside you are filled with plunder and evil. You fools! Did not the maker of the outside also make the inside? But as to what is within, give alms, and behold, everything will be clean for you.”

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Fr. Pedro IGLESIAS Martínez
(Ripollet, Barcelona, Spain)

Today, the evangelist shows us Jesus at a banquet: “A Pharisee invited him to dine at his home”(Lk 11:37). The host must have frowned when he realized his guest could not care less about the hand washing ritual (which was not a precept of Law, but just a tradition from the old rabbis) on top of frowning upon him and his social group. The Pharisee missed the day, and Jesus' behavior, as we would say today, was not “politically correct”.

The Gospels show us that the Lord was basically uninterested in what “people might say” or in what may be considered “politically correct” behavior; this is why, whether we like it or not, these are not criteria on which Christians should base their decisions. Jesus clearly condemns double morality, which clearly seeks convenience or deception: “Oh you Pharisees! Although you cleanse the outside of the cup and the dish, inside you are filled with plunder and evil. You fools!” (Lk 11:39). God's word, as usual, questions us about customs and habits of our daily life, when we end up converting lies into “values”, to disguise our sins of arrogance, selfishness and conceit, while attempting to “globalize” morals into political correction in order to avoid being out of tune or being marginalized; and this, irrespective of the price to be paid in terms of the darkening of our soul, as, after all, everybody does the same.

St. Basil used to say: “He who is prudent must be mostly afraid of living pending of others' opinion.” If we are witnesses to Christ, we must know that the truth will always shine through. This is our mission amidst these men we share our lives with, while trying to keep us clean after the model of man God has revealed to us in Christ. The cleanliness of spirit goes far beyond any social forms and, if we ever have any doubts, let us then remember that blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God. Each one must decide what he wants to see for all eternity.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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"Things seem less difficult to us when we see them done in others" (Saint Ambrose)

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"Faith goes first of all from the word to the idea, but it always has to return from the idea to the word and to the action" (Benedict XVI)

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"Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children. They bear witness to this responsibility first by creating a home where tenderness, forgiveness, respect, fidelity, and disinterested service are the rule. The home is well suited for education in the virtues..."
(Catechism of the Catholic Church, n° 2.223)