

Thirty Second Sunday 2018

My beloved brothers and sisters, there was no more particular group which earned the disdain and scorn of the Lord than did the proud, pompous and judgmental Pharisees and Scribes. They were ostentatious, and often held hard-working and simple hearted people in contempt, because they did not worship nor follow the prescriptions of the law with the same visible outward show that they followed. Many were indeed very religious and pious people, but many were dedicated to self-serving power, rather than the heart, mind and soul of religion, which was self-given service. If this sounds like part of what is happening in the Church today- it is! And the whole of the Church is being called to reform itself into His image and likeness, and not the image and likeness of the World of the powerful, rich and famous!

The whole of Jesus' ministry was dedicated to this self-giving; whereas the Scribes and Pharisees were self-centered religious bureaucrats focused on appearances of religiosity rather than on the service of God and His people. They had forgotten that God calls us to humble, loving service, and radical self-giving, like the poor woman of the Gospel, who gave her very life as a gift to God trusting in His Divine Providence for her. I have been humbled by so many humble, simple people, just like this good soul in the Gospel!

Jesus is warning His followers who will become the leaders of His people, not to follow the example of these pompous leaders; however, He is also warning each of us, not to go through the empty show of Religiosity without the heart, mind and soul of Religion, which is found in radical self-giving to God and His service, and radical self-giving to our neighbor. The Mass, the Holiest thing in this Universe, is empty in our lives, without this inward and outward self-giving. Each of us is called to this self-emptying love of God and neighbor, even if we are no longer able to physically serve, but serve by our humble prayer for others; all of us can do something!

St. Theresa of Avila taught: "Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which he looks (with)compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world. Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are his body. Christ has no body now on earth but yours."