August 27, 2019

Scripture

Matthew 23: 23-26

Jesus said:
"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites. You pay tithes of mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier things of the law: judgment and mercy and fidelity. But these you should have done, without neglecting the others. Blind guides, who strain out the gnat and swallow the camel!
"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites. You cleanse the outside of cup and dish, but inside they are full of plunder and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee, cleanse first the inside of the cup, so that the outside also may be clean."

Our Scripture Reflection

The Pharisee movement was a lay person’s movement that began about two hundred years before Jesus as a reform movement within Judaism. The Pharisees demanded strict observance of the religious Law, all 613 Commandments plus the hundreds of oral traditions built upon them. And, while they demanded strict observance from their followers, they paid lip service to the Law themselves. Jesus calls them hypocrites over and over again because they are nothing more than actors on the stage of life. Jesus wants sincere, faithful and devoted disciples who live in such a way as to please God, first and foremost.

Food for your Journey

To be a witness for God is to be a living sign of God’s presence in the world. What we live is more important than what we say, because the right way of living always leads to the right way of speaking. When we forgive our neighbors from our hearts, our hearts will speak forgiving
words. When we are grateful, we will speak grateful words, and when we are hopeful and joyful, we will speak hopeful and joyful words. When our words come too soon and we are not yet living what we are saying, we easily give double messages. Giving double messages -- one with our words and another with our actions -- makes us hypocrites. May our lives give us the right words and may our words lead us to the right life.


A Prayer from the Heart

Dear God, Your teachings are not meant to rob me of my freedom. To the contrary, when I live Your way to the fullest I actually become free. Help me to please You above all and to serve as Your witness to others. Amen