



Twenty-Second Sunday Of The Year

Lip Service or Service Of The Heart

Introduction

The Pharisees were mainly concerned with externals, so that their worship of God became a matter of outward show. They gave God the service of their lips, but their hearts were far from him. The danger faces us all- mere externalism. We are about to begin our great weekly act of worship. Are we going to worship our Father with our hearts or with our lips only?

First Reading (Deut 4: 1-2, 6-8)

Moses once again urges the people to be faithful to God's law. It is not a burden to be endured, but a source of life and wisdom.

Second Reading (James 1: 17-18, 21-22, 27)

St. James says that it is not enough to listen to the word of God. We must put it into practice. He gives some concrete examples of what he means.

Gospel (Mark 7: 1-8, 14-15-21-23)

This passage contains a clash between Christ and the Pharisees. Christ tells them they have substituted their own law for the law of God, with the result that their worship of God has become mere lip service.

Prayer Of The Faithful

Let us pray to God our Father that our religion may be sincere, that it may be a matter of the heart, for that is only worship that truly honours him.

R: Lord, hear our prayer.



For the Christian community: that it may realize that unless its worship comes from the heart it is false empty, mere lip service. Let us pray to the Lord.

R: Lord, hear our prayer.

For all men and women of good will: that they may realize that unless their goodness is an inner thing it is only a sham, for to show outwardly what is not inside is to live a lie. Let us pray to the Lord.

R: Lord, hear our prayer.

For all men and women no gods but those of money, pleasure, power, or fame: that they may realize that these false gods will eventually betray them. Let us pray to the Lord.

R: Lord, hear our prayer.

That we may be saved from the folly of thinking that it is more important to have clean finger nails than a clean mind and a clean heart. Let us pray to the Lord.

R: Lord, hear our prayer.

Communion Reflection

It is the heart that matters:

It not clean finger nails,
or clean teeth, or a clean skin,
that makes a person clean
in the sight of God.
To be truly clean is to be clean of heart.

For the heart is what I am deep down.
It is the real me.
And while we are all capable of deception,
a corrupt heart will sooner or later
show itself in the face.
At the same time, a clean heart,
like a clean mountain lake,
shines in the face.

Jesus looked at the Pharisees
and said to them:
"These men are no better than the white washed tombs:



they are clean on the outside,
but inside they are full of corruption".
But he looked at Nathaniel and said:
"Here is a true Israelite,
a man in whom there is no trace of deceit".

In other words, here was a transparent person.
Here was a man, who was clean of heart,
and therefore clean all over.