

2020 November 01

Thirtyfirst Sunday of the Ordinary Time

Readings:

First: Malachi 1.14-2.2, 8-10, "Has not one God created us?" (10b)

Psalm 131, "My soul is like the weaned child that is with me." (2b)

Second: 1 Thessalonians, 2.7-9, 13, "We worked night and day so that we might not burden you." (9b)

Gospel: Mathew 23.1-12, "The greatest among you will be your servant." (11)

Teacher, Father, and Instructor

That is God, namely, the one Father, the one Teacher and the one Instructor. If we were to care for this One, everything for us would work perfectly. We have earthly parents, teachers and instructors. Unless these are reflections of the One above, they are of no value and they do not serve any worthwhile purpose. Hence those among us on earth who do these functions to others, to God's children, have to be extremely careful, cautious and even fearful. Unless we behave, this one Father is likely to take us to task.

Jesus instructs the Israelites that they have to listen to the Pharisees and scribes, whom Jesus himself did not like because of their snobbishness, insincerity, and hypocrisy. They had to listen to them because they were assigned to do a task as leaders of the community. They teach with a valid authority, which people have to respect. However, they do not practice what they teach and preach and, therefore, the people should not imitate them, because these leaders have a different set of observances in their lives.

People need a discerning spirit and enter into the mindset of the one who is the One God, Father and Instructor. Prophet Malachi today resonates the words of Jesus. The Prophet accuses the priests who misguide the people and warns them of God's punishment. St. Paul is presenting himself to the Thessalonians as one who truly lives before them as an example in accordance to his call as Apostle, teacher and instructor to them. He behaves with all tenderness as a nurse caring for her own children.

Jesus today provokes us to purify our intentions. Our motives for our worship sessions, the way we dress up, or behave or even pray should never be for the seeing of others, but to relate with the Father, our God, who sees everything in secret, and rewards for honoring him rather than for seeking honor for ourselves. Sometimes even without being aware these discrepancies creep into our life, behavior and even into our worship of God. We need to ask ourselves if we are just 'observance Christians' or worshipping Christians in our gatherings, and if we truly express gratitude toward God, and give glory to him for who he is and what he does to us. We must believe and work for the Father who is in secret and rewards us. Only if you have deep faith you will act so.

Fr. George

