

Celebrating Extraordinary Missionary Month October 2019...

Wednesday, 16 October 2019

Lk 11:42-46

Humility coupled with justice and love is the significant virtue that leads us to salvation

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In today's Gospel, Jesus denounces the Pharisees and scribes for being so blindly committed to following the Jewish law. He uses "Woe to you" to the Pharisees three times in this short passage from Luke.

If we take a look at the passage of yesterday, Luke 11:37-41, Jesus was invited to join a Pharisee for dinner and was rebuked by the Pharisee because Jesus had not ritually cleansed Himself before the meal. It is at that moment that Jesus brings out his points.

One point that Jesus is trying to make with the Pharisees and scribes is, don't treat or look down upon others through the law. But Jesus tries to emphasize the points of loving God, others and yourself; caring for the poor; and living a faith that promotes justice. Laws are important, but all laws should help us to live in the Spirit of Christ.

How easy it can be to observe the minute requirements of the law and forget its spirit! Jesus insists that the highest obligation we all have is love, and we all know that observing the rules with a spirit of love makes a big difference. We feel very angry when our law givers, civil or religious, impose burdens on us which they themselves avoid.

I have heard from our fathers who had their seminary formation in Ghana for their theology, that there is a big differentiation of seniors and Juniors. For, seniors consider themselves as upper class and all their extra work has to be managed by the Juniors. This differentiation is explicit even among the priests, which certain times left me surprised. A few of our fathers use to share the funny experiences they had during their formation due to this senior junior differentiation.

We know that the core of Jesus' message is loving compassion, but his words, directed at religious hypocrites, are angry words. Because he knew that these leaders were to be the guide to people. They were to help the people in their struggles and problems. Instead they tried to exploit them and increased their struggles.

When we wilfully support others to carry their burdens out of love, we realize that our own burdens become light. When our hearts are filled with pride and arrogance we would never be able to see the struggles of others even if we ourselves happen to be the cause of their suffering. Unless we purify our hearts of pride and arrogance we will keep on exploiting our brothers and sisters. Let us not become like the Pharisees who concentrated too much on the externals of the law and the details of the performance of the law. May the rules and regulations of our church, institution, society and nation at large not hinder us to practice justice and love of God and brethren.

May this Divine Liturgy open our hearts to accept our brothers and sisters without judging them. Amen.

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