

"Whoever humbles oneself will be exalted"**Reading 1:** Malachi 1:14—2:2, 8-10**Reading 2:** 1 Thessalonians 2:7-9, 13**Responsorial Psalm:** Psalm 131:1-3**Gospel** : Matthew 23:1-12**Gospel Reading:** Matthew 23:1-12

Then said Jesus to the crowds and to his disciples, "The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat; so practice and observe whatever they tell you, but not what they do; for they preach, but do not practice. They bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with their finger. They do all their deeds to be seen by men; for they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long, and they love the place of honor at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues, and salutations in the market places, and being called rabbi by men. But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brethren. And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. Neither be called masters, for you have one master, the Christ. He who is greatest among you shall be your servant; whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

Meditation: It is often said that actions speak louder than words. These words of Jesus above contain this truth. In the verses following this passage, Jesus goes on to give various examples of how the Pharisees act in hypocritical ways. Furthermore, Jesus points out that "All their works are performed to be seen".

What's most interesting about this passage is not so much the harsh criticism of the hypocrisy and pride of the Pharisees. Rather, it's that Jesus tells His disciples to "do and observe all things whatsoever they tell you..." The truth is that not even the greatest saint can preach the Gospel fully by their actions. This is because the Gospel is perfect, and human beings are not. We will never be perfect instruments of the Son of God. But the good news is that Jesus wants to use us anyway. We are called to witness with our actions. When we fail in our actions we are also called to preach with our words.

This statement from Jesus should help us be more receptive to the Word of God as it is preached by His ministers. If Jesus wanted His disciples to listen even to the words of truth spoken by the hypocritical Pharisees, then He will certainly want us all to listen to His Word as it is preached by the ministers of His Church, regardless of their sanctity.

No minister is perfect, but they do have the mission of proclaiming the Gospel. If we fail to receive the Gospel from them, then it is as much our own sin as it is theirs.

Reflect, today, upon this command from our Lord and allow it to also apply to you as a command to listen to the Gospel spoken by those in the Church. When their example also supports their words, rejoice in that fact. When it does not, be merciful and seek to hear our Lord speak through them anyway. Jesus has much to say through them if you will listen.

Questions for Community Faith Sharing:

1. Is the praise and respect from others important to you? Why is it so?
2. What is the nature of true humility and why should we embrace it as essential for our lives?
3. How can you be a servant like Jesus?

"Lord, may I always be open to the Gospel whenever it is preached. I thank You for the great example set by so many saintly people. I also pray that I will be merciful to those who preach Your Word and fail to live up to it in their actions. I thank You for the ministers of Your Church, especially, and pray for their fidelity to the proclamation of Your Word. Jesus, I trust in You".

Source: <https://mycatholic.life>