

Commentary on the Gospel for Tue, Feb 27th 2024

The temptation of duplicity

Today's Gospel passage is set in Jesus's final days in Jerusalem, filled with expectations and tension. On the one hand, Jesus directs harsh criticism at the scribes and Pharisees, and on the other, he entrusts crucial mandates to Christians of all times and, thus, to us.

When our faith is reduced to empty words, unconcerned with the lives and needs of others, the creed we profess proves inconsistent with the life we lead. The Pharisees and scribes lived in duplicity, trying to hide their inconsistency to protect their reputations.

And so, they performed acts of piety to impress the crowd to appear righteous and to "save face", as we say. This trick is widespread – they put makeup on their faces, makeup on their life, makeup on their hearts... And these "made-up" people do not know how to live the truth. And many times, even we experience the temptation of duplicity.

Commenting on the gospel passage, Pope Francis says, "A common mistake of those in civil or ecclesiastical authority is demanding people to do things — even righteous things — that they fail to practise in the first person. They live a double life. If it is wrongly exercised, authority becomes oppressive, creates a climate of distrust and hostility, and leads to corruption.

Let us turn to the Holy Virgin. May she who lived with integrity and humility of heart according to the will of God help us become credible witnesses of the Gospel.

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