Wednesday 26 August 2020

Today is Wednesday the 26 August in the 21st week of Ordinary Time.

O Lord, my heart is not proud. As I enter into prayer now, can I put aside for a moment my pride, any sense of self-importance I may have, and place myself humbly into the hands of my God, who knows all my faults and failings and loves me still?

Today’s reading is from the Gospel of Matthew.

Matthew 23:27-32

‘Woe to you, scribes & Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which on the outside look beautiful, but inside they are full of the bones of the dead & of all kinds of filth. So you also on the outside look righteous to others, but inside you are full of hypocrisy & lawlessness. ‘Woe to you, scribes & Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets & decorate the graves of the righteous, & you say, “If we had lived in the days of our ancestors, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.” Thus you testify against yourselves that you are descendants of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of your ancestors.

In today’s Gospel, Jesus has some harsh words for the scribes and Pharisees. They were intensely religious, yet Jesus calls them hypocrites. The scribes and Pharisees were intensely religious in all outward appearances, but this failed to match what was truly inside. Can I relate this to my own life?

Is what I believe and feel in my heart in harmony with how I act with others? Which image of myself do I try to present to others? Does it correspond to who I am before God?

As you listen to the reading again, what is the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees that causes Jesus to rebuke them so sternly?

I come before God now, as I am, and offer my whole self to God.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.