

Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time – 02-20-2022

“Love your enemies and do good to them, and lend expecting nothing back...Be merciful just as your Father is merciful. Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven.”

This is the ideal that our Lord presents to us in the gospel today as members of his Church. But most of us struggle to put the ideal into practice in everyday life.

Consequently, some people judge the Church harshly and refuse to enter while others have left the Church because they claim that nobody is actually living the Christian life – they call us a bunch of hypocrites.

Even Gandhi once said that he would have become a Christian had he had ever met one. I would like to have said to Gandhi, I’m a Christian because of Jesus Christ and no one else. But why don’t you become one and try showing the rest of us how it’s done? Apparently that never happened, at least not in this life.

Why does everyone, including myself at times, often think that members of the Church should necessarily be that much better than everyone else?

How easy we forget that Jesus came to call sinners and not the righteous?

Matt Fradd, a well-known Catholic apologist, in an interview with someone who had just turned Orthodox Christian, found himself

thinking that he wanted Eastern Orthodoxy to be true so that I could leave this scandal ridden pathetic looking Church called the Roman Catholic Church.

And then some time after the interview he texted a priest friend about his current struggle with the Church. The very wise priest essentially responded in the following words.

My friend, now you are eating my daily bread! But, that's the age old temptation: a spiritually pure church.

This is the spiritual manifestation of the primordial fight/flight mechanism.

We want to run away from the Church where our shepherd denies Christ thrice. We want to run away from the Church where her elite inner circle fight amongst themselves over who is the greatest. We want to run away from the Church where one of His most trusted collaborators sold Him for a mere thirty pieces of silver.

We want to find a church that has none of the above...but it won't be Christ's Church.

I've been down this hallway and it is appealing at first but, which doorway to enter?

Which denomination? Which "Orthodox" church? They are not in communion with each other. There is no central authority on discipline or doctrine. And all the problems that exist in our Church exist there as well.

Our only option is to fight for our mother, she who is abandoned in the ditch, half-dead, fouled, defiled, wasted and covered in manure and vermin. That's the Bride.

That's how our Church has been treated by her members, even some of the clergy, so we need to help remedy that as best we are able.

Matt Fradd went on to make another very valid point in his podcast. He said if you were to actually find this spiritually pure Church, the minute you become a member it ceases to be pure because you bring all your own weaknesses and impurities into it.

So let's do our best to Love our enemies and do good to them, and lend expecting nothing back...Let's be merciful just as our Father is merciful and stop judging so that we will not be judged. Let's stop condemning so that we will not be condemned and forgive so that we will be forgiven.

This is the ideal that our Lord presents to us today and it seems virtually impossible to live at times.

However, Jesus also instituted the Sacrament of Reconciliation because he knew we would quite often fall very short of the ideal.

Jesus never instituted a Sacrament for no reason at all. I don't think he intended this one to go unused either.

By going to regular confession we make our Church more spiritually pure and consequently more attractive to others by making ourselves more spiritually pure first.