

## FOR THE FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Gospel: Saint Matthew 5: 20-24

Religious should be far more virtuous  
than secular persons

### 58.1 First Point

In today's Gospel Jesus Christ tells his holy apostles that unless their virtue surpasses that of the Pharisees they will not enter the kingdom of heaven.<sup>364</sup> Apply these words to yourself and be convinced that Jesus Christ is addressing them to you, that if you do not have more virtue than people in the world, you will be more liable to condemnation than they on the day of judgment.

People of the world, like the Pharisees, are satisfied with observing the external and outward practices of religion. They go to Mass, listen to sermons, sometimes follow the divine office; but they do all these things and a number of others without any interior spirit.

You who have given yourself to God and consequently should consecrate to him every moment of your life, should do everything in a spirit of religion, without being content to do only what is exterior in the duties of your state. For if people are satisfied with what is external in actions, God who looks into the heart<sup>365</sup> will not put any value on them.

### 58.2 Second Point

Some people in the world who have a certain amount of piety believe that they have fulfilled their obligations when they do not show any outstanding vices, and when their exterior conduct is not wholly reprehensible. But Jesus Christ condemns this attitude in those who claim to be serving him faithfully.

He does not want us to approach him in prayer, or to participate in the Eucharist, if we entertain the least coldness toward one of our Brothers.<sup>366</sup> He wants that, far from hating our enemies, we love them, do good to them, and pray for them.<sup>367</sup>

This is what God requires of you and how he desires that your justice be more than that of people of the world:<sup>368</sup> that you not only keep his commandments exactly, but also that you are faithful to the practice of the counsels of the Gospel, and consequently to the observance of your Rule. Have you nothing to reproach yourself concerning all these matters?

### 58.3 Third Point

Persons living in the world think very little about God and have little concern about their salvation. Their sole occupation is usually with their temporal affairs and the needs of their bodies. It would seem that most have nothing to hope for, or fear, beyond this present life. If we speak to them about God, about what leads us to him, about the essential duties of a

Christian, of the practice of what is right, about avoiding occasions of sin and dangerous company, they then have ears and hear nothing,<sup>369</sup> because all they can grasp is what strikes their senses.

You have withdrawn from the world to lead a life above nature and human inclinations, and to labor for the salvation of your neighbor. You should not, therefore, be attached, and should not devote yourself, to anything but God and the ministry with which he has honored you. All your concern should be concentrated on purely spiritual matters.

364 Mt 5:20

365 Rom 8:27

366 Mt 5:23

367 Lk 6:27-28

368 Mt 5:20

369 Ps 116:6