

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the Gospel According to Matthew (*Matthew 7:1-5*)

“Do not judge or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. “Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye. The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection – Will I be the First to Cast a Stone?

God warns that if we judge others harshly, we will accordingly be judged harshly by Him.

God does not want us to judge other people. We are unable to look into the hearts and minds of people. We do not have the total picture to judge justly and besides we are sinners as well. Can a thief point out to another thief that stealing is not right? He simply does not have the force of moral authority, being just as guilty as the other party is. We do not condone sin but judging other people falls outside our moral authority. That is why God does not want us to judge others. When we are judgemental we sin against God’s love. The judgemental attitude always aggravates the situation further. The person being judged unfairly reacts quickly to defend himself. Instead of being repentant, he erects his armour of defensiveness and righteousness, seeing the need to protect himself against injustice.

We have double standards. Though we do not have the moral authority to judge we are constantly doing it, consciously or unconsciously – in what we think and say. We ascend easily to the moral high ground when we assess the conduct of another person. But we apply a different standard when it comes to ourselves. The double standards are set up by our pride and disorderly self-love. Our pride unconsciously sets ourselves higher in righteousness than other people. Our disorderly self-love tells us we are worthy of a more lenient standard.

We are quick to judge but fail to see our own faults. Our pride searches out faults in others and makes us quick to pass judgement in our thoughts, words or behaviour. At the same time our pride blinds us to our own faults. Paradoxically, the faults we see so evident in others are usually the faults in ourselves that we are blind to. In our pride and disorderly self-love, the faults of others become magnified in our eyes whilst the similar faults in ourselves are trivialised and glossed over. We can spend a great deal of time discussing the faults of others but rarely does it occur to us to examine our conscience regularly to discover our own hidden faults. Bearing a judgemental attitude in our hearts create a false halo around ourselves. A person who is habitually judgemental falls deeper and deeper into the pit of self-deception that the Deceiver has dug for him/her. He/she will be rendered increasingly blind to his/her own failures and faults.

To those who seek holiness Satan dangles the temptation of self-righteousness. To put obstacles in the path of a soul who seeks holiness, Satan introduces into his/her mind many thoughts that are designed to trip the person into the pit of self-righteousness. “I-am-holier-than-thou” attitude could be a hidden attitude of those devout souls who do not consciously guard against pride and practise humility in their daily thoughts, speech and behaviour.

Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, only You can judge justly for nothing is hidden from You. Help me overcome my disorderly self love and pride which influence the way I think of other people. Reveal to me my hidden faults so that with this self-knowledge I can correct myself and respond sincerely to Your call to personal holiness. Being aware of my own failings I will be less judgemental of the weaknesses of other people. Help me practise holy love in my behaviour towards others and may I treat them as I would like them to treat me. Mary, Protectress of the Faith, pray for me to have a meek and humble heart like Jesus. Thank You Jesus. Praise You Jesus.