



Bible Study * 22nd Sunday of Ordinary Time B

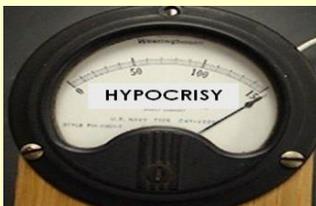
St. Maria Goretti St. Joan of Arc, St. Augustine and St. Peter Claver Parishes
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“He responded, ‘Well did Isaiah prophesy about you hypocrites, as it is written: ‘This people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; In vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines human precepts.’” Mark 7:6-6 NABRE

Reading I: Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-8

Don't Give Me Lip Service! Many waive American flags and claim to be patriotic Americans. Yet only 0.4 percent of the population of the United States are currently serving in the United States Armed Forces. Only 7.3 percent of all living Americans have served in the military. Marcus Garvey, a leader of the Pan African Movement in the 1930s warned, *"You must not make the mistake lip-service and noise for bravery and service."* In these days of polarization and racial insensitivity, we would do well to avoid the noise of those who give lip service to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and look to those who bravely risk themselves in the service of others.

Lip service is hypocrisy, that is, saying one thing and doing another. The first reading and the



Be Doers of the Word. Don't just give lip service.

Gospel tell us that God is not pleased with pious words that come from a defiled heart. In the first reading, Moses reminds Israel that the purpose of the Commandments is to bring them close to God. The commands of God are the Heart of God. The purpose of our obedience to the Commandments is to join our hearts to the Heart of God and our will to the will of God. Obedience, not "lip Service" to the Commandments of God then, is essential to maintaining a relationship with God (vv. 1, 5, 14, 21-22, 40). Laws and religion become ends in themselves when we forget their real purpose. *Note that taking possession of the "Promised land" (v. 5) was not a reward for obedience.* It was a natural consequence of living in God's presence. It was and is tangible evidence of God's Heart beating with ours. Today, God tells us, *don't give me lip service.* DISCUSSION QUESTION: How do you define hypocrisy? Give an example of faithful service.

The Catechism Of The Catholic Church Teaches That God Calls Us To Himself.

2084 God makes himself known by recalling his all-powerful loving, and liberating action in the history of the one he addresses: "I brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." The first word contains the first commandment of the Law: "You shall fear the LORD your God; you shall serve him. . . . You shall not go after other gods." (Duet 6:13-14) God's first call and just demand is that man accept him and worship him.

Reading II: James 1:17-18, 21b-22, 27

DON'T GIVE ME LIP SERVICE. The Letter of James stresses the active relationship between religion and daily life. A Christian must not merely give lip service to the teachings of the Gospel. This point is clear in the beginning of the letter that encourages Christians to count trials as joy, rather than become depressed by difficulties. To do otherwise makes the Gospel of Jesus Christ a lie (vv. 2-4, see 1 Pet 1:6-7).

The wisdom contained in the Letter of James is a command to make faith in Jesus Christ a way of life. St. James' principle doctrines are perseverance in our conversion to God and moral growth. To complete our conversion, we must live the teachings of the Gospel. First, St. James professes the need for an intimate relationship between faith in God and love of neighbor. Our relationship with God should become outward signs of God's presence in us as we live a covenant of faith. Second, the covenant of faith is fueled by the love of God. St. James connects the two concepts in Chapter 1. He defines true religion as a contrast to false religion (vv.26-27). False piety, such as faith without action, is useless in the life of a follower of Christ. *If we love our neighbor, we must show it (Matt 5:22).* True religion is revealed in our love for "widows and orphans" (v. 28). Widows and orphans are Old Testament images of the oppressed and the helpless. St. James appears to be telling these Christians, *"don't give me lip service."* DISCUSSION QUESTION: Do you spend more time talking about property than assisting the poor and oppressed?

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Gospel: Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

Don't Give Me Lip Service! In these days of heightened security, terror alerts and severe weather, it is irresponsible to ignore public service warnings. But the seeds of distrust have been sewn into the body politic by the very ones who serve in government. Therefore, many of us ignore public service warnings. Likewise, the recent scandals among the clergy of the church may cause some to ignore the Commandments and teaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We must not ignore the Commandments of God. To do so is self- condemnation. Our eternity depends on our obedience to and our relationship with God.

The Gospel shows how the instructions of Moses in the first reading were implemented over time. Israel was governed by the Ten Commandments and the Pentateuch. The Pentateuch listed regulations and moral principles that required interpretation. It was not until the fourth or fifth century before Christ that a class of legal experts called Scribes devoted themselves to defining these moral principles. The result was thousands of little rules and regulations that governed all aspects of life. This was a form of "Oral Law" which was not formally transcribed until after the time of Jesus. These rules were handed down by tradition. This is what is meant by the "tradition of the elders" or the "Great Tradition" (v.5). These rules were known and practiced by the elite and educated of Israel. Peasant lifestyles often did not reflect knowledge of the "Great Tradition."

The conduct of Jesus and his disciples did not reflect the observance of the tradition of the elders. They ate (literally ate bread) with unholy, common, hands (vv. 4-5). The rules and regulations were the center of religion for the Scribes and Pharisees. In their view, it pleased God to observe them, thus to break one of the rules was a sin. In contrast, Jesus did not strictly observe these rules and regulations. On one hand, Scribes and Pharisees considered rules and regulations as a religion. On the other, Jesus and his disciples viewed religion as loving God and loving their neighbor.

Jesus, the doer of the Word and the Word of God, says, "DON'T GIVE ME LIP SERVICE" (Ja. 1:22). He invoked God's rebuke of Israel for their dishonest "rote" reverence, and noted that the hearts of the Scribes and Pharisees were far from the heart of God (Isa. 29:13). Their actions were rote religious observances, void of service to others. The explanation in vv. 14-23 is the climax of this Sunday's Gospel and is a direct response to the questions of the Scribes and Pharisees. Jesus says that a true disciple knows the Heart of God, because of obedience to the Commandments. He appears to say, *don't give me lip service*, I want service that comes from the heart. Jesus concludes that it is not what is eaten that defiles. Rather, it is lip service to the Word of God that pollutes the world. DISCUSSION QUESTION: Which do you prefer, donate money to the poor, or offer yourself in service to them?

Pray About It!

Monday

Read Mark 7: 21-23 examine understanding of religion.

Tuesday

Read 1 James 1:2-4. Encourage someone today.

Wednesday

Read Mark 7:6-7. Offer your services to help a neighbor in need.

Thursday

Read Mark 7:8-9. Donate to the St. Vincent DePaul Society.

Friday

Attend Mass and receive the Eucharist.

The Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services:

"A Catholic health care institution must treat its employees respectfully and justly. This responsibility includes: equal employment opportunities for anyone qualified for the task, irrespective of a person's race, sex, age, national origin or disability; a workplace that promotes employee participation; a work environment that ensures employee safety and well-being; just compensation and benefits; and recognition of the rights of employees to organize and bargain collectively without prejudice to the common good." (NCCB, Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services, 1994, p 8.)

How does this pronouncement demonstrate a step beyond lip service to the command to love one another?

Resources: Catechism of the Catholic Church, Second Edition, Revised In Accordance With the Official Latin Text Promulgated By Pope John Paul II, 2084; ; The Collegeville Bible Commentary, Old Testament – Deuteronomy Leslie J. Hoppe, O.F.M. pp. 196 -202; Liturgical Press, Collegeville Min.; The Collegeville Bible Commentary, New Testament – James – Jerome H. Neyrey, S. J., pp. 1219-1221; Liturgical Press, Collegeville Min.; The Gospel of Mark. Revised Edition Copyright (c) 1975 William Barclay First published by The Saint Andrew Press Edinburgh, Scotland First Edition, September, 1956 Second Edition, May, 1958 Published by Westminster John Knox Press Louisville, Kentucky. The Gospel of Mark, Mary Healy and Pete S. Williamson, Baker Academic Grand Rapids, Mi; pp. 134-138. <https://www.enotes.com/homework-help/what-percent-americans-military-veterans-531591>

This meditation is prepared by Deacon Terrel J. Broussard for personal use in Adult Faith Formation at St. Joan of Arc, St. Augustine, St. Peter Claver and St. Maria Goretti Parishes in New Orleans, La. © 2018