

**Falsehood vs. Truth** Twenty-eighth Week in Ordinary Time Friday, October 17, 2014  
7:30 PM Eph 1:11-14; **Lk 12:1-7** St. Ignatius of Antioch, bishop, martyr (Jesus works psychologically by studying how we think and act because if we don't study how we think and act, we will never change.

Jesus' words are very psychological, but not in the modern sense of psychology, which is a study that uses as the norm the way people actually are for the most part. Jesus was a different kind of psychologist. **He uses the norm of himself and taught in such a way as to help people become more like him.** Another way of putting this is enlightened or conscious of God and, therefore, of self, connected to God in whose image and likeness we are created. This is not the belief of modern psychology; it is Jesus' beliefs. **But he works psychologically by studying how we think and act because if we don't study how we think and act, we will never change. But his role is to help us to change.**

So today he uses this idea, **“Beware of the leaven—that is, the hypocrisy of the Pharisees.”** Once again the word “hypocrite” in Greek is the word for actor. **A hypocrite is an actor.** In Greek it does not have the connotation that a person is deliberately duplicitous but, rather, that **there is a disjunction between who the person really is and the character the person is portraying.** In Greek dramas there were masks that were worn so that the audience knew who this character in the play was. Usually in most plays actors had several different roles to play and, therefore, they had several different masks.

As I mentioned this morning, years ago my friend Father George and I went to see *Nicholas Nickleby*, an eight hour play down in Chicago on an extremely cold January day. Now this play has so many characters that even though the cast was rather large, still many members of the cast were playing more than one role. They were more than one character in the play, and sometimes I was a little confused because they didn't wear masks. But, nonetheless, one could figure it out.

**Jesus' point is that sometimes we are in life as if it's a play.** Shakespeare said, “All the world is a stage.” Sometimes that's what it is. **We are playing roles, but we mistake our role for who we are.** We don't know who we are. **Who we are is a beloved child of God, but we don't know that.** We think we are this character that has all these problems or these

issues to deal with or this family to deal with or this business to run or this job to do, and we think that's who we are. But that's not who we are; that's just a role we are playing.

The **Pharisees** were just the same. They **thought who they were were these teachers**. They thought that's who they were, but that's not who they were. Who they were had to do with the image of God in which they were fashioned. And if they were in touch with that, they would have recognized in Jesus something that would be in sympathy with their own understanding of themselves. **They could only be against Jesus because they didn't know who they were**. And that's true for everybody. **The more we are in touch with who we are, the more we can see Jesus and understand who he is, and we can recognize ourselves as all part of one another. This is the task of spiritual formation and transformation.**

**The problem with mistaking our roles for ourselves is it's false.** That's not who we are, and it creates a deceitful way of living. We live by appearances rather than by truth. St. Paul says, **"We do not live by sight but by faith."** Well, that is good advice to live by faith, not by sight. Sight and appearance is deceptive. Faith in God leads to the truth. So Jesus says, **"There is nothing concealed that will not be revealed."** The appearances will fall away. The substance will be revealed. **"Nor secret that will not be known."** The problem with living in one's role is that there is something inward that is all hidden and it's not always good. Some of it is good. Of course the truth is good that we are made in the image and likeness of God, but also **sometimes our inner distortions are covered up and concealed**. And when they never come to the light, well, then **they remain in darkness and they continue to do their work undermining our well-being**.

**"Therefore whatever you have said in the darkness will be heard in the light."** There is no secret life. The light has to come into the darkness and make it all clear. **"And what you have whispered behind closed doors will be proclaiming on the housetops."** Now normally what people whisper behind closed doors is things they don't want anyone else to know, things they are not proud of, or things they are not sure of, maybe rumors about other people. So **he is alluding to a whole world of talk, accusation, suspicion that is really nothing but negative emotion and negative feeling and deceit and fiction**, and we are better off without all this.

**“I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body but after that can do no more.”** The Romans, for example, ISIS, for example, suicide bombers, for example, gangsters, criminals—they can kill you, yes, but that’s all they can do. **“I shall show you whom to fear. Be afraid of the one who after killing has the power to cast into Gehenna; yes, I tell you, be afraid of that one.”** He’s referring to the father of lies, and it’s lies that destroy our souls. And lying goes along with living by appearances, since appearances aren’t really true. It’s a way of promoting a false picture, a false image of oneself. It’s a way of trying to create oneself instead of letting God create us. Instead of going along with God’s plan, **we substitute our own**, our plan, our story, our character that we have written into the script. **This is destructive of our souls because it isn’t true.** It’s all make-believe.

Then he goes on to end this with, “Are not five sparrows sold for two small coins? Yet not one of them has escaped the notice of God.” See, God knows everything. **There is nothing hidden from God;** that’s the point. And **God accepts all of us the way we are, so we have to as well.** But in accepting ourselves as we are, we also have to let go of everything that we think and feel that is really false. Whether it’s false good or false bad, we don’t want to go into. Falsehood is bad. We want to be truthful and honest and accept the love that God has for us in our brokenness, in our sinfulness, in what we have done and what we have failed to do. And we have to be clear that we understand ourselves as that. And then **we have to be just as welcoming and forgiving and compassionate toward everyone else,** as we realize God is welcoming and compassionate and forgiving toward us, and let go of all false projections of perfection or any kind of projected goodness or anything false or phony, and **let go of all talk of other people. Let them simply be because God has not appointed anyone of us to direct the affairs of other people.** Parents have a certain responsibility to guide children, but adults have to guide themselves. That is our work, and we can only do it with God’s help. But we can only receive God’s help when we are willing to let go of what the world says we are and let God teach us. “Even the hairs of your head have all been counted.” Everything is known to God, so **there’s no need to be afraid of God**—there’s no need to be afraid of God. God is the one you don’t have to fear.