

Christian Hypocrisy Twenty-first Week in Ordinary Time Wednesday, August 26, 2015
8:15 AM 1 Thes 2:9-13; **Mt 23:27-32** (Jesus is calling for a new kind of self-reflection, self-awareness, so that we recognize who we are and we bring that to God and ask for his grace that we can be like God, and not simply appear to be righteous.)

“Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites.”

It is very important when we read from Scripture that we apply what we are reading to ourselves and to our present day. These are not stories or teachings from some distant past or some other group of people. It’s about us. **It’s about the human condition.** And you can be sure **our Catholic Church is full of scribes and Pharisees.** And we ourselves are tempted to fall into their path.

Jesus once used the term leaven. He said **“Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees.”** Leaven is actually an enzyme that works within dough to make it rise, in other words, to puff it up. **This happens in religious communities where certain movements make people puffed up.** And what Jesus is talking about here is their **inordinate attention to what is external, what appears to be so.** He said, “They are like whitewashed tombs, beautiful on the outside, but inside full of death and dead men’s bones and every kind of filth.” So **he is calling for a new kind of self-reflection, self-awareness,** so that we recognize who we are and we bring that to God and **ask for his grace that we can be like God, and not simply appear to be righteous,** as this mentions. There are so many different ways in which we can fall into this sort of trap.

The word “hypocrite” itself refers to an actor. Now an actor plays a role, but really isn’t the character that he or she is playing. So this is talking then about the possibility that **we could be playing a role being a Christian.** And we know the words to say, but we don’t really mean them. We know what is expected of a Christian, so we pretend to do that; but we really don’t want to. **Our heart isn’t in it.** In various ways we try to reduce the cost to ourselves. **This is hypocrisy: playing a role,** saying the right things, appearing to do the right things, but inwardly not really desiring what God desires, not really desiring to worship God or to please God, but rather to please ourselves and perhaps to be respected by others because of the outward appearance we are able to pull off. Something to note!