

Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

Be Who We Are Twentieth Week in Ordinary Time Saturday, August 26, 2017
8:15 AM Ru 2:1-3, 8-11; 4:13-17; **Mt 23:1-12** (We cannot live in our heads, in our imagination and pretend.)

Today's reading on the practices of the Pharisees perhaps goes by us as if it's not relevant, but if we really try to study it, we will see it is relevant. He says for example that, "**All their works are performed to be seen.**" Shakespeare said that "**All the world's a stage.**" The point is though that all these actors on the stage are **just playing roles**, and so with the Pharisees. They are playing a role. Their role is rabbi. Their role is honored one in the community. In itself this is not too terrible, but the point is **that isn't really who anybody is**. A role is a role; **a character is a character, but a person is something else.**

That's why Jesus ends with this, "**Whoever exalts himself will be humbled.**" **If you pretend to be someone you're not**, which is what acting is all about, which is what the stage is all about that Shakespeare was talking about and, therefore, the world is all about, that ends poorly. **We will be humbled and even humiliated because we really are someone in the sight of God and we have to find out who that is.** We have to recognize our complete union with God, our total dependence upon God, and what we are really supposed to be and do in the world. When we do that, when we are not willing to create something artificial but be who we are, then we will be exalted. So the life of God is really a life with extraordinary benefits, out of this world benefits, but **it requires a certain sort of realism. That's what humility is.** *Humus* means earth. **We have to walk on the earth.** We have to be truthful. **We cannot live in our heads, in our imagination and pretend.** We have to walk on the earth and be who we are.