



**Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Saint Matthew 5: 20-26.**

*Jesus said to his disciples: "I tell you, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter into the Kingdom of heaven. "You have heard that it was said to your ancestors, You shall not kill; and whoever kills will be liable to judgment. But I say to you, whoever is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment, and whoever says to his brother, Raca, will be answerable to the Sanhedrin, and whoever says, 'You fool,' will be liable to fiery Gehenna. Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Settle with your opponent quickly while on the way to court. Otherwise your opponent will hand you over to the judge, and the judge will hand you over to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. Amen, I say to you, you will not be released until you have paid the last penny."*

**Introductory Prayer:**

Lord Jesus, thank you for this time I can now spend with you. You constantly fill my life with so many blessings. How ungrateful I am at times! I wish to collaborate more perfectly in establishing your Kingdom on earth. I love you Lord, and with the help of your grace I will strive to become someone to whom any soul can come in order to discover your truth, your life, your love. Take my life, take this day and make it yours. Amen.

**Petition:**

Father, help me to shun hypocrisy and seek true holiness.

### **1. Beware of Subjective Impressions:**

How much righteousness would it take to surpass that of the scribes and Pharisees? Not much, we suspect. Theirs was holiness in appearance only, which is to say no holiness. And what would one discover on the "inside" of such a soul? Plenty of self-deception; plenty of self-indulgent complacency in a subjective impression of holiness; a repugnant holier-than-thou demeanor. It's easy enough for us to read the Gospel and wrinkle our noses at those bad ol' Pharisees. In fact, it's about as easy as telling ourselves that we could never come under the spell of our own subjective impression of holiness. That is why we must always be ready to examine ourselves, before Christ and with an acute awareness of our misery and limitations. Do I live my life engaged in a genuine pursuit of holiness or in a genuine pursuit of my own vanity and self-glorification?

### **2. Holiness is Incompatible with Pride:**

Pride and personal holiness mix about as well as oil and water. Where our ego is, little if any room is left for God. What does it mean to be a disciple of Christ but to be someone who fills himself totally with God in order to bring him within the reach of everyone. But what union, grace or friendship with God can there be in a proud soul? What fervor, what degree of holiness? There is no possible compromise between God and a proud soul – either the soul would have to let go of itself, or God would have to stop being God.

### **3. Holiness and Integrity:**

At the heart of genuine holiness is the virtue of integrity, a virtue rich in nuances and meaning. Integrity means being a person with only one face, a person who is the same on the inside and on the outside: "what you see is what you get". Indeed, integrity is foundational for holiness, because it constitutes the very essence of personal honesty and sincerity, which are fundamental for the moral life and the seedbeds for a host of other virtues. In our pursuit of holiness, we should never tolerate duplicity of any kind in our behavior. We should avoid like the plague the least hint of ambivalence in our motivations, or incongruity between our thoughts, judgments, choices and actions. There can be no holiness without integrity. In fact, there can be no genuine human happiness unless it lies on the bedrock virtue of integrity.

### **Conversation with Christ:**

Lord Jesus, I want you to be the meaning and center of my entire life. Let me disappear and you appear more and more in my life so that, with a holiness that is genuine, humble and true, I will always be an instrument for the salvation of all people. Amen.

### **Resolution:**

I will take a hard look at my life to identify the areas where duplicity manifests itself and take a concrete step toward living with more integrity.