



Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Saint Matthew 7:15-20.

Jesus said to his disciples: "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but underneath are ravenous wolves. By their fruits you will know them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Just so, every good tree bears good fruit, and a rotten tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a rotten tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. So by their fruits you will know them."

Matthew 7:15-2.

Introductory Prayer:

Lord, before I can produce anything lasting in my life, I need to be united to you in prayer. Aware of my weakness and inclination to sin, I trust all the more in your forgiveness and mercy. I believe in your presence in the Eucharist. It gives me the assurances that you really are with your Church until the end of time.

Petition:

Lord, help me to see more easily the goodness in people around me.

1. Wolves in Sheepskins:

Today we abound with information, but are short on guidance. The media tell us that abortion is OK, that stem-cell research on human embryos is compassionate, that same-sex marriage equals tolerance. Wayward faithful ignore or insult papal teachings. "The time will come when people will not tolerate sound doctrine but, following their own desires and insatiable curiosity, will accumulate teachers and will stop listening to the truth and will be diverted to myths" (2 Timothy 4:3-4). How do I judge what I hear day by day? How do I gauge what the media tell me? Do I absorb everything I hear like a sponge? Or do I try to find out what the Church says on issues? Am I aware of how much the media can steal my interior peace? That it can leave me thinking in a very worldly way?

2. See The Fruits:

Our Lord gives us a good criterion for gauging the work of other people: We are to look at what they produce. The people we see daily on television -- do their lives seem peaceful and happy? Are their families stable? Often, the most stable among us are those who live low-key lives. God often chooses to work outside of the spotlight. He works in those families that quietly raise their children in the faith. What lasting fruits am I producing for God? If married, have I been open to new life? If single, do I dedicate a fair amount of time to serving others? Do I help my friends learn about Christ? Do I help worthwhile charities?

3. Misjudging:

The problem of judging can go the other direction. We might think that someone isn't a good person, or that he isn't very talented. Yet we are surprised, sometimes years later, to find that same person living in a near-perfect marriage, raising a happy family, or producing a thriving work of charity. Was our initial judgment faulty? If so, why? Do we recognize and appreciate virtue in others? Or are we fixated on the externals: Their looks? Their wealth? Their bubbly personality? What does that say about my hierarchy of values?

Conversation with Christ:

Lord, I am surrounded by views of the world so many opinions, so much information. I sometimes feel overwhelmed. Let me see in your vicar on earth, the Pope, the safe and sure path to follow in the midst of confusion.

Resolution:

I will compliment someone for the hidden, but lasting, work they are doing for the Kingdom